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## **PRESS, PREACHERS AND POLITICIANS**





THE AUTHOR

*{Elliott & Fry*

# PRESS, PREACHERS AND POLITICIANS

REMINISCENCES: 1874 to 1932

*by*

HARRY JEFFS

*Chevalier of the Legion of Honour*

*"The world is so full of a number of things."*

R. L. STEVENSON.

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## FOREWORD

WHEN, after forty years' service on the Editorial Staff of *The Christian World*, and in the Editorship of *The Christian World Pulpit*, I retired from Fleet Street to comparative leisure, I amused myself by jotting down memories of a varied career of fifty years in newspaper work. The manuscript was put away with little thought of publication. So many ministers and other friends have told me that my recollections of notable men, not a few of whom were my personal friends, and of historic events, would be of value and interest to those who knew the men in their earlier years, and to those who have only heard them 'praised by praised men,' that I have yielded to the pressure and revised and enlarged the manuscript for publication. It may be that my personal experiences in journalism of all sorts, in which I was 'a man of all work,' will be interesting and helpful to some young men and women who have journalistic ambitions. Such 'a number of things' are crowded into the book that the quotation from R. L. Stevenson's children's poem seems fitting.



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A COUNTRY PAPER OF THE 'SEVENTIES . . .	9
II. DUDLEY AND A 'DOMINIE' EDITOR . . .	18
III. WOLVERHAMPTON. THREE EDITORS IN ONE .	27
IV. LONDON. <i>THE ECHO</i> AND MR. PASSMORE EDWARDS . . . . .	41
V. THE STORY OF <i>THE CHRISTIAN WORLD</i> . .	44
VI. A HUNDRED THOUSAND SERMONS . . .	67
VII. POLITICAL PERSONALITIES . . . . .	85
VIII. PEAKS OF THE FREE CHURCH PULPIT . . .	104
IX. MISSIONARIES AND LAYMEN . . . . .	136
X. 'FANCY RELIGIONS' . . . . .	150
XI. 'NATIONS SPEAKING UNTO NATIONS' . .	168
XII. AT SOME HISTORIC BEGINNINGS . . . .	195
XIII. OLD LAMPS AND NEW IN FLEET STREET .	214
XIV. NEWSPAPER PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION	226
INDEX . . . . .	249



# PRESS, PREACHERS AND POLITICIANS

## CHAPTER I

### A COUNTRY PAPER OF THE 'SEVENTIES

*High Stool or Composer's Cases?—Arithmetic decides  
—Old Time Apprenticeship—Early Victorian Sur-  
vivals—Four-in-the-Morning Phonography—'Picking up'  
Languages—Shouts into the Machine—Furtive Essays  
in Journalism—The Way Opens*

BUT for a man happening to cross the Market Place at Warwick my career would have ended at the age of four. There was a fountain commemorating the visit of Queen Victoria to the castle in 1861. The man saw two little legs sticking out of the fountain, and hauled out the owner, myself, just in time. In the years following I saw men in the stocks, against the Market Hall, usually four hours for drunkenness and disorderly conduct. With other boys I gathered round, and made comments which led the men to say what they would do to us when they were freed; but then we had engagements elsewhere. Still in the basement of the Market Hall is preserved the 'Cucking stool'—a plank on the end of which, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, termagant wives, on the proved complaints of their husbands, were strapped and run out over the Avon bank and plunged



for curative treatment. Whether the treatment was effectual is doubtful.

How came I to become a journalist? It was because I was hopeless at arithmetic. At the National School I was top boy in everything except arithmetic. Figures and everything mathematical left me stone cold. At grammar and composition, history, geography, anything to do with humanity or animals or plants, I was keen as mustard. Scripture got hold of me in spite of dry-as-dust methods of teaching it—lists of the Kings of Israel and Judah, worrying through, under the direction of a curate, books that were out of the range of lads in the early teens. It happened that I was a Nonconformist ‘Independent.’ The Chapel was dominated by Scottish deacons and teachers—descendants of a colony of travelling credit clothiers who had settled in the town after the union of the two kingdoms. These worthy men indoctrinated me in the ‘Assembly’s Shorter Catechism with Proofs’—a question and answer and the ‘Proofs’ to be repeated each Sunday morning. In the same year I got first prizes for both the Church Catechism and the Assembly’s Catechism, and the two Catechisms have been fighting each other ever since. I was two months from fourteen when the headmaster—a little man with scientific skill in applying the cane to the most susceptible parts—was asked to recommend two boys for apprenticeships. I was given the first choice. That choice was between a solicitor’s office and the composing room of the county paper. I had been in solicitors’ offices, and the tall stools and the ledgers appalled me. I dared not face the risks of totting up long bills of costs. The composing room was chosen.

That was in the middle of 1874. The paper had been started in 1805. The proprietor was son of the founder, and was then himself about seventy. He might have been a character in a Dickens novel. He sat solemnly in the counting-house, facing a clerk as old and Dickensian as himself. There had once been a stationery business. In the shop-window were rusted inkstands and pens and other goods that might have been there since the Crimean War. No customer ever entered. I rolled the ink on to the formes at an ancient hand-press for the general printing. I helped to make the rollers for the cylinder press that had served for the newspaper since the Trafalgar victory. The rollers were made of a delectable composition of treacle and glue. I had to stir the boiling mixture for hours before it was poured into the moulds. To this day the memory of the odour emitted makes me feel queasy. The paper never went to press much before ten on Friday nights. A good Baptist deacon was the machinist. I 'fed' the sheets to the machine at the rate of three hundred an hour. At midnight we knocked off to toast bread, fry bacon over the boiler fire and brew tea, and never was a meal more appetizing. The machinist, when anything went wrong, was conscientiously precluded from using any swear words, but he had invented a substitute which, emitted with volcanic eruptive force, greatly eased his mind—'Daniel Lambert's blast and iron furnaces!'

Henry Sharpe, the proprietor, was a bachelor, and two maiden sisters lived with him. It was an old house, favouring large families of mice. One or other of the sisters would set a caged trap that would not hurt a

prisoner. If one was caught I would be summoned from the composing room and asked to take the trap up the garden, 'and let the poor little thing go.' My mission of mercy would be rewarded with a piece of cake or a jam tart. Sometimes Henry Sharpe would send for me to draw out and straighten nails from an emptied packing case—a pennyworth of nails at the expense of two hours' work in the composing room, much to the discomposure of the 'Father of the Chapel' when I had reached a stage at the type-setting cases which made my work as valuable as that of a journeyman.

There was a Mutual Improvement Society at the Brook Street Chapel. Thirty years before it had been founded by Henry Dunkley, son of a Baptist minister. Dunkley had collected a library which included such books as *Cassell's Popular Educator* and *Chambers's Encyclopædia*. There were also volumes of *The Controversialist*, organ of the Debating Societies in the golden age of such societies when they trained scores of men for leadership in local and national public life. The bookcase containing the library had been stowed away and forgotten after Dunkley left the town. Dunkley became editor of *The Manchester Examiner*. His 'Verax' articles were about the best written and most statesmanlike contributions to progressive political education of any contemporary writer. Unfortunately for *The Manchester Examiner*, it had relied so much on 'Verax' that when he died the 'general interest' of the paper was not enough. A company of Liberals lost £60,000 on it and then dropped it. But to return to that bookcase. I discovered it when I became Secretary of the Mutual Improvement

Society. The books opened to me a world of intellectual romance and adventure. I became a Columbus, a Cortez, a Livingstone, always discovering new lands. I devoured the articles in the *Popular Educator* and the *Encyclopædia*, and when a new edition of the *Educator* began to appear in monthly parts I spent out of my sixpence a week sevenpence a month on the numbers. These set me going on history modern and ancient, and on French, Latin and Greek. The languages were always a lure to me. 'What's the use of it?' friends asked scornfully. 'What good will languages ever be to you?' There was the idea then as there has always been that time spent on getting knowledge that does not mean more wages in occupation or profits in business is wasted. But those languages, and others added to them in the course of forty years, strengthened the backbone of mental concentration and broadened the outlook, and the books collected in the languages, and filling the shelves of my library, make dullness and boredom unthinkable. And then *The Controversialist*! Those hammer and tongs debates on such evergreen mid-Victorian subjects as, 'Was Carlyle or Macaulay the Greater Historian?' 'Was the Age of Queen Elizabeth or the Age of Queen Victoria the Greater?' 'Is Aristocracy or Democracy the better Form of Government?' taught me that there are at least two sides to every question, and that truth is never absolute on any side, but judgment must be applied to decide on which side the balance of argument lies. It is likely enough that the discovery, reinforced when I had to report cases in the police courts and the Quarterly Sessions and Assizes, made me a somewhat tepid dis-

ciple of any school of political or theological thought, all the more as it was my business for so many years to attend the conferences and meetings of all parties and all Churches, including at one time meetings of Churches and parties at which theoretically I should have risen in vehement protest.

It may be that the association of Henry Dunkley with Brook Street Chapel had a subconscious influence on my determination, instead of setting other men's copy in type, to provide copy myself for the printers, but the new edition of the *Popular Educator* clinched the decision. And again came in the element of what looks like chance. My hours of work were ten a day, from six to six in summer. My mother used to call me in good time to get up. It happened one day, however, in midsummer that I got up on my own, thinking it was about half-past five. On going downstairs I found it was only just four. Instead of returning to bed I began to look through the last number of the *Popular Educator*. There were the first two lessons of Pitman's Phonography. The first lesson fired me. Before I had started for the office I had mastered the consonant signs. In the evening I mastered the vowel signs, and was proud 'as a peacock with two tails' when I found myself able to write short words. I ploughed steadily through the lessons and in three months was able to take fairly good summaries of the sermons of Rev. John Gibson, always my very good friend and helper, and of the papers and discussions at the Mutual Improvement Society. Then I persuaded a fellow apprentice to give me an hour's dictation each evening in the room at the top of the three-centuries-old house that was then

our home. It was the time when Gladstone was delivering his flaming philippics against the Turks for the Bulgarian atrocities, and when John Bright, Sir William Harcourt, Joseph Cowen of Newcastle, Disraeli and other great lights were more or less tearing and raging. It was not long before a whole page of such speeches was committed to my note-book, but it took many more hours to read the note than it had taken to write it. And that is where so many debutants in shorthand come hopelessly to grief. Nothing is more needful and nothing more distasteful than to pore over notes and be held up at frequent intervals by some faulty outline or wrong consonant or vowel. I am credited with a considerable amount of patience. Certainly I have never been disposed to throw up the sponge to Pitman or any other man, and I stuck grimly to the deciphering of my notes till they revealed the causes of the hold-ups.

The cylinder of our printing machine was of the size of a steam roller. As it slowly revolved it made a deafening clatter. While I was feeding in the news sheets I shouted into the machine vocabularies, declensions and conjugations of French and Latin, varied by poetry I had committed to memory, and while working for examinations I repeated the whole of a Protestant Catechism, three chapters of Luke's Gospel and two chapters of Romans memorized for a Sunday School teachers' examination. I had persuaded fellow teachers to join me in the examination, and that was the beginning of a work extending over forty years in training teachers, lay preachers and Brotherhood speakers—a work that led to the authorship of something like a dozen books.

Books had a way of capturing me, and holding me with inescapable grip. In the middle of a droughty summer the water supply failed. I was told to pump water for the boiler from the greenhouse cistern. While pumping a heavy stone ornament fell and nearly smashed a foot. During six weeks of lameness I started on Alison's *History of Europe*—dealing with the French Revolution and the Consulate and Empire. The whole twelve volumes were devoured before the year was out. That gave me an interest in the Revolution that led in after years to the reading of the thirty odd volumes of Thiers, and to half-a-hundred other volumes on the Revolution and the Empire, to be followed by a similar working through the histories of the English Revolutions of the seventeenth century, including Clarendon and Macaulay. Macaulay's *Essays*, by the way, fired me with a consuming desire to read the books he reviewed and histories of the times and biographies and works of the men he wrote about, and of course my first *Essays* were Macaulayesque. I was amused when I came to London and heard Principal A. M. Fairbairn, of Mansfield College, speak and preach, to note how he also had fallen under the spell of both Macaulay and Carlyle, and had been unable to break loose from a style that had in it Macaulay's strings of antitheses and Carlyle's gnarled sententiousness. During my Wolverhampton period an old compositor told me how as a youth he was employed by the printers of Macaulay's *History*. Macaulay, he said, used to go into the composing room and ask the printers, if they came on a sentence the meaning of which was not clear at first sight, to let him know and he would

rewrite it. That bit of information I treasured for example.

My first amateur appearance in journalism was with a paragraph about a rowdy attack by a 'Skeleton Army' gang on Salvation Army pioneers in Warwick Market Place. That was sent to and used by a Leamington paper. A little later the paper asked the Baptist minister to supply it with a column of a lecture he was about to deliver on the life of Mohammed. He did not feel disposed to do the summary, but through a member of his Church he asked me to attempt it. I sent the column and thought I had struck a Golconda when I received a remittance of five shillings. I have never forgotten how the prophet wrote the Koran on mutton shoulder blades.

In those days apprentices were expected practically to give their time in return for their training in the trade. My wages began at three shillings a week, rising a shilling a week for seven years. At the end of the sixth year Henry Sharpe died, and the paper was sold. That enabled my apprenticeship to be broken. I found the way open to the realization of my journalistic ambition. I secured a junior reportership, 'to assist at case,' on a new Liberal weekly to be started in the first week of January, 1880, at Dudley, in the Black Country. My salary was to be a guinea a week. My fifty-three years of journalistic life dates from the first Monday in January of that memorable year.



## CHAPTER II

### DUDLEY AND A 'DOMINIE' EDITOR

*A Scot's 'Wrong Turning'—'One-ear' Listening—The Prince of Phonographers—The 1880 Election—Illiterates and the Adult Schools—Black Country Hobbies—A Tramp to hear Dr. R. W. Dale—The Preacher and the Man*

IF you have an enemy with money, or a friend in danger of soul-peril from too much success, there is no surer way of giving the 'knock-out' to the one, or dragging the other out of danger, than to persuade him to start a newspaper, and still better to edit it himself. There is no man with soul so dead as to think he could not run a paper. That Dudley weekly was started and edited by James Napier, who had made money as proprietor and master of a school. He was a true blue Presbyterian, and a sound Gladstonian. Two years saw the end of his money and of the paper. He simply could not 'boil down.' His leaders ran to a page, and a page would be given to a function at his church. He had not learned that to be made to pay a paper must not so much be 'viewy' and 'up-lifting' as 'newsy' and 'snappy.'

The first number did not appear till Saturday noon. We had been continuously at work since six on Friday morning, and kept ourselves from dropping asleep over the cases by pinches of snuff of which the older 'comps' had thoughtfully laid in a store. Never during the year that

I was on the paper did we get to press before five on the Saturday morning, when three or four of us adjourned to an early opened coffee-house for coffee and cakes.

That year was invaluable for the all-round practice it gave me. I left Warwick, a lad brought up in Puritan surroundings, almost incredibly ignorant of the world, and painfully shy. The shyness was soon rubbed off. The police-court work was like 'Satan's invisible world displayed.' I ought to have remembered the lesson taught by *The Controversialist* that there are two or more sides to every question, but when I began hearing cases opened for the prosecution I wondered why the prisoner was not condemned and sentenced outright without wasting time on evidence for the defence. But when I heard the case for the defence opened by the solicitor I wondered why the poor fellow in the dock was so persecuted and why he was not immediately discharged with an apology. I learnt very soon to trust neither of the lawyers, nor any of the witnesses except the police officers. 'Evidence' was usually a competition in lying, clumsy or skilful, and the magistrates, or the jury, had to judge at least as much by the appearance, the manner and the tone of the witnesses as by the statements they actually made. For two or three years I was attending four or five police-courts every week, and also Quarter Sessions and Assizes. It was often weary work enough, the County Court still more wearisome, but I had always the grammar or a reading book of a language with me, and continued to learn while I kept one ear open to what was going on in court. That faculty of divided attention every journalist acquires. In later years I wrote scores of leaders, notes

and 'Specials' while reporting a Conference Session or a public meeting. Points in speeches were duly noted as they came, or if not, trained memory served to carry a good half-column or column of a speech.

In London seven years later I came to know Thomas Allen Reed, and we became intimate friends. He was an Ipswich man, and when Isaac Pitman launched his system of Phonography Reed learnt it, introduced himself to Pitman, and became the flaming evangelist of 'Sound-writing,' lecturing on it all over the country. Shorthand was Reed's second religion, and he was a most orthodox devotee of the original phonographic faith. He regarded the Eleventh Edition as the final word, and 'improvements' introduced in later editions excited his wrath as dangerous heresies. I am anticipating in order to illustrate the acquired faculty of divided attention and 'unconscious listening.' Thomas Allen Reed was an almost miraculous shorthand writer. I was with him at Chelsea Parish Church when, reporting for my *Christian World Pulpit*, he created the record for speed. The preacher was the American Bishop Phillips Brooks. Brooks had a habit, due to some slight impediment to his vocal organs, of filling his lungs by a long breath, and then pouring out sentences in a tumultuous torrent till the breath was exhausted. Reed told me after he had transcribed his note that it came out at 227 words a minute for twenty minutes—140 to 150 is a good average. Once he showed me a page of a verbatim note of an open-air speech taken during a heavy shower, the note-book and the umbrella being held together in the left hand. The shorthand was beautiful enough to have been printed as a

model in a text-book. Reed told me that the note-taking habit had become so mechanical by years of continuous exercise that he had not only taken a 'verbatim' for a good hour while thinking of something else, but he had actually fallen asleep for a quarter of an hour or more while taking a note in a Parliamentary Committee or in the Law Courts, but kept on taking the note, and never missed a word. Reed attended International Phonographic Congresses in the days when shorthand was a cult with enthusiasts as passionate as are the devotees of Esperanto and other attempts to create a *lingua franca* that would help to bind the nations in a brotherhood of mutual understanding. Reed would demonstrate the possibilities of 'sound writing' by submitting to the test of taking down for ten minutes a reading or a speech in a language he did not understand and reading to the Congress what he had taken from fully vocalized notes.

But to get back to Dudley. My first religious engagement cost me a sorely needed couple of shillings. It was a Sunday School anniversary service at Brierley Hill. The singing was charming and appealed to me as an ex-Sunday School secretary. When the collection came an official came to me in the back pew and thrusting his plate into my hand asked me to take the collection along that side. I felt—that, I learned, was the idea—that I must set a good example, and led off with the florin. 'Once bitten twice shy.' I had to skimp my meals the next week, and declined to collect at future similar engagements.

No engagements captured my sympathy more than the anniversaries of the Adult Schools which in Birmingham and the district were in the heyday of their success.

Joseph Chamberlain at Birmingham, my later friend Edwin Smith of Bewdley, and George Cadbury, of Bournville, were great chiefs of the movement. The passing of the compulsory Elementary Education Act had the effect, a decade later, of bringing humiliation to illiterate parents and grandparents. At the 1880 General Election Dudley and the East Worcestershire Division had the highest percentage of cross-marking illiterate voters in the country. Children would go home and ask 'Daddy,' or 'Grandpa,' 'What does this spell?' or 'How do you spell this word?' and as likely as not, when Daddy or Grandpa confessed shamefacedly that he could not spell, the ruthless child would retort, 'What a dunce you are!' It was such humiliations that sent thousands of middle-aged and elderly men into the Adult Schools which, in those days, taught reading and writing.

Knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
 Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll,  
 Chill penury repressed their noble rage,  
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

At the Adult School hearth the frozen current was thawed and began to flow. I saw men past seventy receive book prizes for having learned to read, and heard them with swelling pride read passages to the audiences. At other meetings, of a certain political party, I had to remember hard that I was a reporter, and to hold myself in from crying 'Shame!' when speakers, and sometimes a clergyman, denounced the Board Schools, as discontenting lads with labour, and 'teaching them to become clever forgers!' The nation has suffered, and is suffering heavily,

from its apathy towards education. We have given to the children a light whitewash of teaching instead of training their intelligence and stimulating the appetite for knowledge. That is what has delivered the masses by millions into the hands of the glib-tongued and plausible fomenters of revolution, themselves as ignorant of the lessons of history and sound economics as babes in the cradle. On visits to Germany before the war, when I saw the children trooping cheerfully to school at seven or eight in the morning, I feared for our own country's future, remembering its attitude towards education.

That 1880 Election was a political eye-opener to me. It was the last Election before the passing of the Corrupt Practices Act, and its corruption was the conclusive argument for the Act. It cost each of the Dudley candidates more than £5,000. More than 500 public-houses were engaged as party committee rooms. My first meeting, a Liberal one, was in a public-house 'committee room.' The chairman, a 'self-made' Wesleyan coal-owner J.P., made himself thoroughly at home in an atmosphere choking with tobacco smoke. At the close, making a hollow of his hand, and raising it to his mouth, he remarked, 'It's thirsty work, isn't it? I've no doubt some of you will want to talk over what you have heard downstairs.' They did. I saw them six deep at the bar, and I question if much of the beer was paid for over the counter.

For the East Worcestershire fight I was told off to go with the Conservative candidate—the Liberal was Sir Hamar Bass, of Burton. We travelled in style, a carriage with a pair of fast-trotting horses. We found a Liberal

procession, with a band, in the main street of a mining village through which we passed. Feeling ran high, and the order was given to charge and scatter the Liberal procession. We charged, amid howls of execration, and chunks of slag and "arf-bricks" were hurled at us. That was the country in which the story ran: 'There's a stranger, Jack.' 'Then 'eave 'arf a brick at 'im.'

The coal and iron trades were highly prosperous then. Ex-working men had become semi-millionaires within the decade following the Franco-Prussian War. As usual, with pockets full of money, illiterate working men could never save. The story went that a miner went into an expensive fruiterer's and asked, 'What is that queer thing in the window?' 'A pineapple,' he was told. 'How much is it?' 'Ten shillings.' 'I'll take it, and the old woman shall boil it with a leg o' mutton on Sunday.'

Dog fights and pigeon flying were the favourite recreations. A favourite story was that of a dying collier to whom the parson was administering consolation. Reference was made to heaven and the angels. The collier pricked his ears. 'Shall I have wings, Parson?' he asked. 'Yes.' 'And shall you have wings?' 'Yes.' 'Then I'll fly you for a sovereign.'

There were two ministers who provided frequent copy. One, a Unitarian, often selected his 'Lessons' from Shakespeare, Goethe or Carlyle, and his sermons were excellent literary essays. The other, Mr. Fox, of King Street Congregational Church, was a brilliant eccentric. He gave Sunday evening addresses that were queer blends of piety and science. Scientific diagrams draped

the front of the pulpit, and the preacher enforced his points by illustrations from the diagrams.

It had always been my wish to hear Dr. R. W. Dale, of Carrs Lane, Birmingham. One Sunday, with two fellow Sunday School teachers, I walked the thirteen miles to Birmingham for the evening service. We sat in the gallery. It was my first sight and hearing of a 'Prince of the Pulpit.' The sermon, sixty-five minutes long, was on one of those 'august themes' on which Dale spent the full force of his mind and heart. I was bond slave to his wizardry—wizardry with no 'frills'—till the last word. It was logic, all compact, logic on fire, but being logic it left me mentally wrung out. One needed to have sat under Dale, to have been trained to wrestling with him, to come out from the usual hour or more without that wrung-out experience. I saw and heard a great deal of him afterwards in Birmingham and elsewhere. He, before Joseph Chamberlain, was the unchallenged moulder of Birmingham political thought, and the soul of his political thinking and teaching was that there must be no divorce between a man's politics and a man's religion, that what is religiously wrong cannot be politically right, that it is as much a part of a Christian's duty to 'serve the present age' in the affairs of the city or the State as in the conversion and edification of the individual soul. Everybody in Birmingham knew him and loved him. He was a 'good mixer.' I was told how in an election campaign he was not above helping in committee rooms, in such matters as filling envelopes with appeals to voters. It was accepted that his was literally the biggest brain in Birmingham, and the head was of such capacity for the



brain that specially large hats had to be made for him. One 'touch of nature' in after years, when scribbling with a galloping pen for 'next editions' had wrecked what once had been my copy-book calligraphy, made him kin to me. His penmanship was so undecipherable that he employed a journalist friend of mine to translate his manuscript. One day the transcriber, specialist in Dalesian though he was, took a slip to the author, and said, 'Look here, Dale! I have worried for half-an-hour over this and can make nothing of it. Would you mind dictating it to me?' Dale took the slip, spent ten minutes on it with wrinkled forehead and then confessed, 'I am sure I knew what it was when I wrote it, but I cannot read it now. However, I will dictate what I am sure I had it in my mind to say.'

## CHAPTER III

### WOLVERHAMPTON. THREE EDITORS IN ONE

*At Wolverhampton—The Evening Star—‘Well known to the Police’—and Coroner—‘Mass Meetings’—The Betting News Problem—Enter Andrew Carnegie—and Exit—‘Self-made’ Local Patriots—Charles Albert Berry—An unjournalistic Carrier Pigeon—Joseph Chamberlain and John Bright—‘To the Ridiculous’—‘Fourth Edition’—‘BBB.’*

IN view of the 1880 Election a number of Wolverhampton Free Churchmen, mostly deacons of Queen Street and Snow Hill Congregational Churches, started a Liberal evening paper, *The Evening Star*. There were two old-established weeklies, one specializing on the rural, and the other on the industrial side of things. The Directors had the usual blissful ignorance of the fact that newspaper running is among the most highly technical and speculative of all enterprises. There was in *The Evening Express* a fairly prosperous Conservative rival that did its best to satisfy the Liberals with its reports. In those days reporting *was* reporting—adequate, fair, enabling readers to study what was said on both sides and to arrive at their own judgments. The Dudley and district representation of the *Star* became vacant, and I secured the position. It meant covering a large section of the Black Country, much of it on ‘Shanks’s pony.’ The ‘case’ was abandoned for ever. I became ‘well known to the police,’ to the

coroners, to the leaders of Labour and the great employers. A journalist needs to know and be known to everybody who may prove sources of copy. Coroners' inquests were often held in public-house club-rooms. Sometimes the *Express* man and myself were asked to 'oblige' by making up a jury if the number fell short. I did not mind 'obliging' but disliked the viewing of the bodies, often horribly burnt and mangled in colliery or iron-works accidents. Once a witness standing near the door was fidgety. An Irishman on the jury called, 'Officer, admit that man out!'

There was a case of an eighteen-year-old lad, of feeble mind, who, annoyed at being scolded by his mother, went to the school where three younger children were, and waited for them to come out. Fortunately one was 'kept in.' The brother drowned the others in a pit pool and gave himself up to the police. I called at the police station and, being on friendly terms with the Sergeant in charge, was asked if I would like to see the prisoner. I found him lying on his plank bed, cheerfully playing a tin whistle which, seeing it on the musical Sergeant's desk, he had asked to be lent to him.

Trade Unions then were not what they have since become. Secretaries, however, had to justify their position. Every few weeks there would be a paragraph, or a short report, of a 'Mass Meeting' held in some outlandish place. The tip was given to myself and the *Express* man, both of us out for copy. Often ourselves, and half-a-dozen men scraped together, were the 'Mass,' but the eloquence flowed none the less freely. Often in later years I smiled at paragraphs in great London dailies

of Black Country 'Mass Meetings,' but it was not for me to stop the half-crown and five shillings derived from that source by the lineage men.

When a big 'verbatim' was to be done at Wolverhampton, to appear in a special edition immediately after the meeting, I was called in to take 'turns' with the reporting corps. Sir William Harcourt, Henry Hartley Fowler—the Liberal 'new man' of the 1880 Election, and future Lord Wolverhampton—and others were to speak at a demonstration. I took three or four two-minute 'turns.' H. H. Fowler put in a bitter complaint the next day as to the swarm of errata with which the report, as corrected by himself, bristled. It happened that my 'turns' were clean. The result was that I was appointed second on the town staff, and as the chief reporter shortly after joined *The Birmingham Post* I was appointed chief. Within two years, through various removals and changes, I became successively sub-editor and editor of *The Evening Star* and the associated weeklies. I wrote for one weekly agricultural articles, for the other an iron and coal trades article. A journalist needs to be 'a man of all trades.' For *The Midland Counties Express* I invented charades and ran short story and poetry competitions. Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, the future novelist, whetted her unfleshed pen in those competitions which I hope encouraged the development of her genius.

As to the *Star*, some of the deacon directors heartily disliked the racing news, and at a board meeting decided to instruct me to stop the expensive sporting services. Well, I had been brought up in a Puritan atmosphere, and have never made a bet in my life; but as a journalist

I doubted the wisdom of the instruction, though I had to obey it. Within a fortnight of the stopping of the sporting services the *Star* had lost 14,000 of its 30,000 circulation. The directors, with bankruptcy staring them in the face, met in a panic and instructed me to order the resumption of the services. I have hundreds of times, at religious conferences and meetings, heard newspaper owners and journalists denounced for giving racing reports and 'tips,' but what are they to do, if the newspaper-buying public drop papers that leave out what they demand? A newspaper is a commercial concern, enormously expensive to carry on. There are shareholders to the tune of scores of thousands of pounds. Are they to lose their money, rather than to give space to matter without which the paper will not pay its way? When I have suggested that those who object to racing news, and reports of scandalous cases, should put their money down and start a thoroughly 'clean' paper, they fail to see it. In fact, most such people would decline even to take in a paper just because it eliminated elements undesirable to themselves. Experiments in the direction of purging papers of matters which the editors themselves heartily dislike have usually proved disastrous to the papers. A journalistic friend who started a weekly on lines that he thought would appeal to men and women of the churches had to drop it after a few months' run. He said to me, 'I got no support from those in whose interest I thought I was running the paper. And the astonishing thing to me is that I have found in the homes of men who vehemently denounce the public-house and the low music-hall, papers and magazines that are on the

moral level of the public-house and the low music-hall.' Papers have to cater for the average, and the way to improve the intellectual and moral quality of papers is to raise the moral and intellectual standard of the average. Here is where the churches and the schools come in.

With the retirement of Andrew Carnegie from control of the Pittsburg Steel Corporation there came great flutterings in the British journalistic dovecotes. 'Andra' had been a long time in the United States, and with all his cuteness he had lost the hang of things in this country. He had conceived the idea of upsetting the British Monarchy, and establishing a republic, no doubt with President Andrew Carnegie as its Washington. As a beginning he got together a syndicate of English newspaper-owners, such as Hugh (afterwards Sir Hugh) Gilzean Reid, of Middlesbrough: Samuel Storey, M.P., of Sunderland, and others, together with Mr. Thomas Graham, of Wolverhampton, a 'brither Scot,' and an old schoolfellow at Dunfermline. *The Echo* was bought from Mr. Passmore Edwards in London, a dozen provincial 'evenings' and a score or so of weeklies were acquired, and the campaign was opened. The directors of *The Evening Star*—it is questionable if any dividend had ever been paid—were easily induced to sell. Mr. Carnegie, however, went one better. He successfully tempted *The Evening Express* directors, and having got hold of both papers, they were merged in *The Express and Star*. It meant good men losing their jobs. For myself it meant heavier work, and very little extra salary. Mr. Graham was a better economist than newspaper director, and a

policy of 'cutting down' of the staff was followed, very much at my own expense.

Republicanism, needless to say, failed to catch on. Mr. Carnegie angled to be adopted as Liberal candidate for Wolverhampton, but the Wolverhampton Liberals would not swallow Republicanism. Stereoeed leaders, of a Republican shade, were sent to me from the London *Echo*, but more often than not I substituted leaders of my own. With staff cut to the bone, I often dictated four leaders a week for *The Express and Star*, and one each for the two weeklies.

Andrew Carnegie dropped into the office fairly frequently, and my personal relations with him were pleasant enough. Once he chatted about his going to the States as a lad, and the means by which he got into the way of becoming the world's then richest man. I gathered that you had to leave home at about fourteen years of age, to land with about a dollar and a half, to start by carrying passengers' baggage at the railway station, and, as soon as you were able, to send money for your dear old mother to join you. Alas, the prescription was given to me too late! I was 'too old at twenty-five!'

Samuel Storey did not help the Carnegie candidature when, presiding at a dinner, instead of 'The Queen,' he ostentatiously proposed the toast of 'The Chief of the State.'

'Andra,' being a realist and an unexcelled business man, being also a Scot and as such indisposed to throw good money after bad, though his income in 1885, Mr. Graham informed me, was £400,000, soon perceived that a British Republic was a long way off the political

map. He disposed of, or gave away, the papers of the Syndicate. Mr. Passmore Edwards, partly deploring the Republican tinge of the London *Echo*, and partly unhappy at having no powerful organ of public opinion to control, bought the *Echo* back. A hard bargain was driven with him—he gave £110,000 for what he had sold for £100,000—but anybody who could make a profit out of Passmore Edwards richly deserved it.

Local patriotism flourished at Wolverhampton, which set itself up as Birmingham's rival for the hegemony of the Black Country. The local magnates, many of them very rich self-made men, gave their time and their brains to public service, and were donors of princely generosity of, and to, institutions that added to the amenities and cultivated the taste of the townspeople. I attended School Boards keen on education whose chairman and several of the members had had no schooling in their boyhood, and all the more felt the need of education. Once, in a big bucket, I descended the 1,000 feet shaft of a new artesian well, sunk four miles out, with two brothers credited with being worth half-a-million each, though they had started work at nine or ten.

While I was at Wolverhampton Charles Albert Berry, of Bolton, accepted a 'call' to Queen Street Congregational Church, which, for many years, had been the town's principal training school for public men. Berry was the first of many Free Church leaders, whose names were household words, with whom I became on terms of intimate personal friendship. He was a joyous soul, with a smiling delight in alarming the 'unco' guid' and the sticklers for ecclesiastical propriety. He would appear in



the pulpit in a tweed suit, and with a gay buttonhole. He was charmingly 'clubbable.' Some of the 'dear old ladies' raised their eyebrows deprecatingly when they knew that he frequented the Liberal Club and played billiards. In his later years no one received more boisterous welcome on his visits to London, at the N.L.C., than 'C. A. B.'—'a hackney carriage,' said he once at a public meeting, 'but by no means hansom.' His debonair manner in the pulpit kept everybody awake, and he let himself go on the political platform. My friend Arthur Porritt has told the story of how the *Express*, before the amalgamation of the papers, attacked him after a Liberal meeting, for 'the humbug of talking democracy when he receives £900 a year for being a rich man's chaplain.' It was 'Week Night Service' day, and an irate deacon, flourishing the *Express* in the vestry, said, 'Look here, Berry! They say you are getting £900 a year. What are we to do about it?' 'Do?' replied Berry. 'Make it £900 a year, my friend!'

Berry liked to drop into my room, and seat himself on a corner of the table, pouring out a ceaseless flow of witticisms and good stories. Much as I liked him, and enjoyed his brilliant talk, sometimes when telegrams and district men's parcels of copy were pouring in, and the stuff had to be dealt with and rushed to the composing room for the next edition, I had almost forcibly to eject him.

Berry's refusal of the sensational call to succeed Henry Ward Beecher at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, New York, made him the cynosure of all Free Church eyes. Visits to Grindelwald Reunion Conferences organized by Sir Henry (then Dr.) Lunn had the effect of converting him

into a 'High Churchman,' in the Free Church sense of the word. He dressed in sober ministerial style. When the movement for uniting the Free Churches in a National Free Church Council was launched, Berry became its flaming apostle. He and Hugh Price Hughes, another of the flaming apostles, often came into friendly conflict when the constitution was being beaten out. Price Hughes believed that 'never since the days of the Primitive Church,' or 'since the Reformation,' or 'since the Evangelical Revival,' had anything so epoch-making been started as some new venture of his own. He was frankly astonished, when he had made up his impressionable mind, that anybody could take a different view. 'Berry,' he would say, 'more in sorrow than in anger,' 'it amazes me that a man with your intelligence, and such a good Christian, cannot see that what I propose is the only sane and Christian course.' 'You mean, Hughes,' Berry would reply, 'that you and I do not quite agree.' Hughes was really pained once when, after a new 'Never since——' scheme he had launched, I said in a *Christian World* 'Note' that 'Mr. Price Hughes starts a new epoch three times every week.'

The last time I saw Berry, just before his sudden death, was one Sunday morning at Highbury Quadrant Church. I went to greet him in the vestry after the service. 'I hope,' he said, 'I have not been talking nonsense. The fact is I have been careering round the country for weeks, speaking every day, and I am dead weary and feel empty. I had no time to prepare anything. Unfortunately, I have the gift of being able to roll out sonorous sentences that the people who don't know believe mean a tremendous lot.

Sometimes, as this morning, I begin in the hope that an idea will strike me. If it does not I am miserable, but most of the hearers don't notice it. When the idea does come I know the difference, and I simply rollick to the end.' It is a joy to myself to have seen his son Sidney M. Berry more than make good as Jowett's successor at Carrs Lane Chapel, Birmingham, and as Secretary of the Congregational Union.

A canny man on the *Star* staff, while I was second reporter, conceived the idea of stealing marches on the *Express* by the use of carrier pigeons to get copy of inquests and other matters in outlying parts to the office. A pigeon cote was installed within easy reach near the roof, and after a few weeks' habituation to their home a start was made. There was an inquest four miles out. I was told off to do it. A boy carried the pigeon in a basket, with thread to fasten the message under a wing. The message was securely fastened and the pigeon released. We walked leisurely to the office, and I expected to hear of our little 'scoop.' What I found was the pigeon, with the message still under its wing, disporting itself on the roof, and indifferent to every blandishment used to persuade it to come down and deliver its 'copy.' We had to give up the idea of relying on pigeons as our Mercuries.

Once, in those early days, I was sent to collect the 'story' of a brutal murder. A man gave himself up to the police one morning confessing to the murder of his wife. He had gone home madly drunk. A quarrel arose, he had struck and killed his wife and carried and thrown her body into a deep pit pool. The police had not, at the time we heard the news, recovered the body. I found the house

of the couple in a very low quarter. People, many evidently of dubious character, flocked round me, and volubly told all they knew of the ways of the man and his wife. Back at the office, I knocked together a thrilling column, which was immediately set in type. It was eleven, and I went on to the police court where the man was to be charged and remanded. The officer in charge had just said enough to justify the remand when in walked the 'corpse'! The man's story was true up to the point of the quarrel, but the wise wife had slipped out and gone to her mother's. Stupefied by the drink, and with murder in his mind, the man fell asleep believing that he had really done the deed. My column, I am glad to say—though as a journalist it was the loss of beautiful copy—had to be scrapped.

There was to be a double execution at Stafford and I was instructed to witness and report it. At that I boggled. I had my doubts as to the rightfulness of capital punishment, for one thing—in later years, having witnessed a dozen murder trials, I shared the view 'Let Messieurs the assassins begin' by abolishing murder. I said I would not go to the execution, even if it meant dismissal. A man who had witnessed one or two executions volunteered, and I was excused.

Things are not always what they seem. We started *The Express and Star* with the 'Fourth Edition,' followed by the Fifth and 'Late.' There was a pig-iron classification that puzzled me when I went 'on change' at Birmingham. There were three grades—B, BB and BBB, which signified 'Best,' 'Best best' and 'Best best best.' Apparently the manufacturers, in the matter of 'Pigs,' were of like

mind to the seasoned toper who said, 'There is no bad beer, but some is better than the rest.'

For three years, in those early 'eighties, I went to the Birmingham Town Hall to report the speeches at the annual 'account of their stewardship' of the three members—Joseph Chamberlain, John Bright and Philip Muntz—Muntz, a highly respectable 'make-weight.' Chamberlain was then the terror of the Tories, the lasher of the House of Lords as 'a Venetian Oligarchy,' the English analogue in Tory thought of Robespierre or Marat. Reading his speeches I had expected to hear a lava-torrent of scorching voluble invective. To my astonishment the man was 'cool as a cucumber.' When he appeared on the platform the audience rose and roared the salutation with wildly waved hats and handkerchiefs. Chamberlain sat motionless as on his lawn at Highbury when meditating on the orchids of which a specimen was in his buttonhole. He did not look at the audience, he did not appear to be listening. When he was called on to speak, he was so deliberate that I could almost take him down in long hand. The Joseph Chamberlain, however, was in every word he spoke. Every word was calculated to make its effect. There were phrases that bit and stung like scorpions, uttered with such measured calmness as if they were perfunctory commonplaces. There was no real malice. Those who knew him best said, 'It was just Joseph's way,' and many who were the victims of his way met him on neutral ground without resentment.

John Bright was nearing the end of his career. He lived much in the past—in the Hungry Forties, the Anti-Corn Law years, and he dropped into anecdote about Cobden

and others who were with or against him in the fight against the dear loaf. I married the daughter of a Stratford-on-Avon man who told me that as a boy of eight in those hungry years he was sent two miles early each morning to work in a brickfield at a shilling a week. His mother gave him his food for the day, but he was often so famished that he ate it all before reaching the brickfield, and had to stop the pangs of hunger by turnips or carrots pulled up furtively from a field.

It was very good any way to see and hear John Bright, who made his first anti-Corn Law speech in the school-room in which I became a Sunday scholar. There was the silvered head, the benevolent John Bull face, the words from 'the well of Saxon undefiled,' the memories of 'the Angel of Death' of the classic Crimean War speech, of the 'Force is no remedy' of the speech against coercion in Ireland, and other phrases that were familiar as household words. There was English history of the nineteenth century incarnate. Most of all, there was the voice, that voice that was music to hear. Now and again it had the clear sweetness of a silver bell—an intonation I heard again only in Spurgeon, when in moments of rapt inspiration his voice would rise a tone or so above his normal level. It was the Chamberlain and Dale influence that drew Bright into the Liberal Unionist camp. Had Bright lived to witness Chamberlain as 'Tariff Reformer' I cannot believe that their union could have lasted.

Perhaps it is falling from the sublime to the ridiculous to recall that for years strangers seemed to detect in myself such a personal resemblance to Chamberlain that I was pointed out with such remarks, not always *sotto*

more, as 'That's Joe Chamberlain.' It would seem that I have no real physiognomical individuality, for I have been variously told that I was like Asquith, Birrell, Rosebery and, as a journalist friend said, 'Lord Grey, only more so.' Once, at the National Liberal Club, an unknown man came up and asked me, 'How's your wife?' imagining that I was still another leader of the party. Curious that I have never been discovered as the 'double' of a 'star' Conservative!

#### A GLASGOW POSTLUDE

My health broke down under the strain of overwork and I resigned. I was offered a very easy year's engagement to start a weekly Temperance paper, *The Scottish Reformer*, at Glasgow. It was a year of rest, and nobody could have treated me better than the Scots committee that gave me the appointment. It happened that Percy L. Parker, future proprietor-editor of *Public Opinion*, succeeded me on *The Scottish Reformer*, and other journalists who made good began there. Among other things I wrote a serial story, and a ladies' column over the signature 'Aunt Ruby.' That woman's column was enjoyable work, as when a Scot in love wrote to enquire, from my supposed woman's experience, if I thought he could safely marry on a wage of 30s. a week. I replied, 'That is more than enough with a good Scots wife, but the minimum in England should be at least 40s.' I hope they married and lived happy ever after. Somehow I picked up a suspicion of 'awkcent' during my year in 'Glesca.' When long afterwards I took to tub-thumping I was often accused of—or complimented on—being a Scot.

## CHAPTER IV

### LONDON. *THE ECHO* AND MR. PASSMORE EDWARDS

My migration from the provinces to Fleet Street was the outcome of an undelivered letter. A new Gladstonian daily was started at Newcastle-on-Tyne. When I gave my notice at Wolverhampton, Gilzean Reid, who had something to do with the new venture, offered me, on behalf of the editor, the chief reportership. I wrote accepting the offer. Three weeks later Gilzean Reid entered the office and scolded me for not having replied and said that as the editor could wait no longer, the post had been filled. My letter was never returned to me, and I never knew how it had gone astray. It was then that I undertook the temporary engagement at Glasgow. It was Gilzean Reid's recommendation that a year later led to my joining the staff of *The Echo*, which had passed again into the possession of Passmore Edwards. Gilzean Reid, I was convinced, was not sorry to be out of the crumbling Carnegie Syndicate. He acquired an estate in Belgium, and became a friend of King Leopold, while Andrew Carnegie, at his Scottish castle, was the host of dukes and duchesses, who were waked every morning by the skirl of the Laird's piper's bagpipes.

When I went to *The Echo*, following my fellow Warwickshire man, Ernest Parker, who powerfully helped to restore the prosperity of *The Daily News*, I found that



the staff was of a kaleidoscopic character. Passmore Edwards was an able but exceedingly short-tempered man. Men on the staff, in a burst of his short temper, would receive notice; if they did not, as soon as they had sized the situation, they looked out for a change to some serener atmosphere. Howard Evans, a Puritan in religion and a Radical who wrote a scathing book about 'Our Old Nobility,' was the acting Editor. If Passmore Edwards's breakfast had not agreed with him, or there was bad news of some investment, he would say to Howard Evans on arriving at the office, 'What's the leader about to-day? Let me see it.' He would glance at the title, tear the MS. into shreds and throw it into the wastepaper basket, saying, 'What's the use of writing on that? Write on'—so and so. How Howard Evans stuck it was a mystery to the rest of us, but he was a philosopher, and made necessary allowance for human nature. Once a man who had been 'fired' in one of Passmore Edwards's capricious moods sent in articles from outside, under an assumed name. Passmore Edwards praised them until, accidentally discovering who sent them, he gave orders that the man was to be cut off.

I wrote leaders and editorial notes, did occasional theatrical first nights and a good deal of reviewing. Personally I did not butt up against Passmore Edwards's nasty temper. Once he taught me a useful lesson. I used in a leader the phrase *Semper Eadem*. 'Why can't you say what you want to say in English?' he demanded. 'How many readers in a hundred will know what *Semper Eadem* means?' Since then I have tried to avoid quotations in other languages. I was tempted to 'get it back' on

Passmore Edwards, however, by asking 'Why do you print *Audi Alterem Partem* as the motto of *The Echo*? Isn't "Hear the other Side" good enough?'

*The Echo* never really recovered from the Carnegie-Storey experiment in Republicanism. 'The New Journalism,' introduced by T. P. O'Connor with *The Star*, progressively undermined a paper that had been a valuable political and general educator. 'T. P.'s' brilliant band of young bloods—George Bernard Shaw did musical criticism, and others distributed high seasoning through all the columns—drove nails into the coffin of the Old Journalism which, however informative and however judicious, came to be called 'stodgy' by those fed on papers that aimed primarily at the whipping up of jaded appetites.

It was curious that I passed from the service of one great donor of Free Libraries to that donor's serious competitor in the same field. Carnegie, however, with his hundreds of thousands a year, was in the library distribution business as David to Saul—where Saul 'slew his thousands' David 'slew his ten thousands.' It was an amiable hobby. Was it in *Wisdom While you Wait* that Carnegie was pictured as a Peer, bringing to heel his brother Peers by the threat, 'My Lords, if you do not carry this resolution, I will present every man jack of you with a Free Library'? Passmore Edwards is commemorated by the Passmore Edwards Settlement, which he was induced to found and endow by Mrs Humphry Ward, who was the presiding genius of its varied work down to the time of the War.

## CHAPTER V

### THE STORY OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

*The Founder of great Religious Journalism—James Clarke—Dr. Peter Bayne—‘Marianne Farningham’—‘Christopher Crayon’—Emma Jane Worboise—Alfred Harper—F. M. Holmes—James Allanson Picton—James Clarke’s Catholic Heart—Champion of Spurgeon—William Cuff—‘J. B.’—W. D. Milsom—A ‘Treasure Island’ Sequel—‘To See the Editor’—‘Union’ Assemblies—Dr. Hannay and the Larger Congregationalism—Guinness Rogers and ‘Storms in Tea-Cups’—Sir John Maclure in Merry Mood.—The Rise of Dr. J. D. Jones*

Nor knowing when my time would come for a collision that would mean short notice to leave, I accepted the invitation of Mr. James Clarke to join the staff of *The Christian World* and its associated papers in Fleet Street, the building facing Chancery Lane. The idea was that I should assist in the development of the general and literary interest departments of the paper. My own idea had been to join the staff of a morning daily after I had got into the Fleet Street atmosphere. As it happened, the work and the conditions were so congenial that I soon abandoned the ‘daily’ idea, and remained at *The Christian World* for forty years. A ravenous bookworm, and keenly interested in all matters religious, I found that *The Christian World*, *The Literary World*, *The Family Circle* and *The Christian World Pulpit*—all creations of

James Clarke—gave me outlets for all my personal interests. For thirty-eight years I edited *The Christian World Pulpit* as a 'side line.'

James Clarke was the first of the great religious journalists. In fact, he was the founder of the religious journalism that aimed at equality with the best daily and weekly secular journalism. An Ipswich lad, brought up in Tacket Street Congregational Church and a fellow enthusiast for phonography with Thomas Allen Reed, he and Reed came under the glamour of London and its legendary 'golden pavements.' They came to London together. Clarke along with Reed became a 'gallery hand' in the House of Commons; but he had a virile, creative mind, and had the ambition to cut his mark in editorial work. A Baptist minister conceived the idea of a general religious newspaper, distinct from the merely denominational papers, which were Parish Magazines in their chronicling of denominational small beer, and were mostly narrow in their outlook and theological spit-fires. The minister, like my old chief Napier of Dudley, shared the illusion that anyone could run a paper. He persuaded a number of friends to put down £4,000 or £5,000 capital, and the first number of *The Christian World* appeared in 1857. Within a year it was grating on the rocks. James Clarke was called in to save it. He was brimful of ideas, a born journalist and a first-rate business man. He soon got the paper on the move. Its freshness and variety of interest made a strong appeal to the Nonconformist community, and to a considerable constituency in the Church of England, for it was more than a Free Church paper. Its articles, notes and sum-

maries of the general news of the week were so good as to win the admiration of the ablest secular journalists. Editors of foremost dailies have told me how they learned much from the way in which *The Christian World* packed so much of general interest into so small a space. The paper largely increased its circulation by its clear and comprehensive bird's-eye view of the week. Busy men, unable to keep up with the dailies, found that *The Christian World*, at the week's end, kept them informed on everything that was worth knowing. With one or two partners, James Clarke soon made terms with the little minister to go out, and ultimately he became the sole proprietor. Not long before the War, I was told there were still living at Rushden people who had subscribed to the first capital, but had never seen the colour of their money, either in capital or interest. For a short time after joining the staff I was placed in a room in Chambers in Chancery Lane that had been occupied by Dr. Peter Bayne, Editor of *The Literary World*. Most weeks there came in some Scot who had taken the Southern Road. They were usually 'on their uppers,' and not infrequently breathed an aroma of the national beverage. Bayne had been a kind-hearted 'Brither Scot' and his touchability had got noised abroad in his ain country. It cost me not a few 'lent' half-crowns to maintain the Good Samaritan reputation of the room. Only once or twice were the half-crowns returned, but I have no doubt many of the borrowers, within the year, were doing better than an Englishman like myself would have been able to do. Journalists are among the most 'touchable' of men. They have not all the ready wit of Phil May

who, asked one day by a man who met him, 'You haven't got half-a-crown, Phil?' replied, 'Who told you?'

Bayne was of the Robertson Nicoll type of Scots bookman. He had greedily read everything worth reading he could lay his hands on. He had fine discrimination and wrote appreciations of his favourite authors with a relish that communicated itself to his readers. His *Literary World* 'Lessons from My Masters' started many future authors and journalists on the right road. Before I dreamt of going on to the staff I took in *The Literary World* and *The Christian World Pulpit*, of one of which I became the most prolific reviewer and of the other the Editor. *The Literary World* from a weekly became a monthly, and finally was merged in *The Christian World*. When the dailies discovered that there was a great book-reading public and started review pages, with a literary Editor and a staff of expert reviewers, the purely literary papers 'felt the draught,' and most of them came to an end.

James Clarke gathered a staff of men and women of varied gifts and gave them generous encouragement. There was Miss Mary Ann Hearn, who wrote articles and poems over the name of 'Marianne Farningham.' She was a fine combination of wholesome piety and sunny humour. She started as a school teacher. She had for many years a Bible class of young women at Northampton, and told when old age led to her retirement to Barmouth how she was the girls' confidante in their love affairs, everybody's kind Auntie or Fairy Godmother. She told how she began with old-fashioned Puritan and fogley prejudices against the things that the modern girl

went in for, 'which were never dreamt of, and would have been thought unmaidenly, when I was a girl. When first I saw a girl on a bicycle,' she said at a meeting, 'I was horrified. I said, "How disgraceful!" But I have two nieces staying with me now, and each has her bicycle in the hall, and if I were not so old I would have one myself.' 'Marianne' and I were great friends. Happily she did not know that it fell to my lot in her later years of retirement to sub-edit her poems. She dashed one off regularly every week—the office legend was that she thought of it a quarter of an hour before the post went out on Tuesday night, but never failed to catch the post. The poem often came very much in the rough. There were limping rhythms and doubtful rhymes. Sometimes it was necessary to re-write a stanza to make the poem presentable. It is due to Marianne to say that she never complained of the revision. She had poetic feeling if the technique was poor. She had the knack of expressing the homely, dear commonplaces that touch the hearts of the average. Tens of thousands read Marianne to whom her poems were grateful and comforting messages. Some of her poems found their way into hymn-books and were popular as recitations. Her body lies on a favourite height overlooking the sea and sands of the Mawddach estuary at Barmouth, on which she loved to gaze during her last years.

Then there was J. Ewing Ritchie, whose pen-name was 'Christopher Crayon.' Like Marianne Farningham he 'kept the ball rolling' for something like forty years. He was a genial, jovial 'worldly Christian,' with a quizzical eye on the funny side of things religious and

general. He roved the country, and all was fish that came into his net. He had the 'holy friar's' appreciation of good eating, and often rhapsodized on meals he had enjoyed at such or such a function or in such or such a Hydro—for he rather specialized on Hydros. I remember an article of his I read in proof in which there was a description of a roast chicken that was Hazlittian in the classic perfection of its gastronomic appreciation. In an article on the Bible Society Anniversary he recalled an early Anniversary at which the chairman was a generous Earl, much more at home following the hounds than on such a platform. In his address he frankly confessed, 'I cannot say that I have read the Bible much myself, but those who have tell me it is a —— good Book.' Christopher told me how, while staying at Folkestone, he was invited to join a party of pilgrims in brakes to Canterbury. 'Yes,' he said, 'on conditions.' 'What are the conditions?' 'Free passage and travelling mercies.' As arrangements had been made at the best hotel, the 'mercies' were 'sure.' Christopher Crayon was all the same a seriously religious man. More or less consciously he carried on a useful mission—that of showing that there was no reason why a Christian should be fiddle-faced, and that it was mostly humbug to affect the attitude that a man who had heaven in view should not get all the innocent enjoyment and fun he could extract from God's good world. When he died I carried on his rôle for twenty-five years over the signature of 'J. Penne.'

Another member of the staff who kept up her association with *The Christian World* for very many years was Emma Jane Worboise. In the 'fifties the ancient Puritan



prejudice against fiction and the theatre was still powerful. This world was a vale of tears, and it did not become a Christian to fritter away time and mind, and waste emotions on the doings and sayings and vicissitudes of imaginary people in a story or in a play. As late as the later 'seventies I was gently warned by a deacon who found I was reading Shakespeare and Dickens of the danger of starting on such slippery slopes. Within the last few years a lady who had read an article I had written on novel reading wrote to tell me how when she was a girl her mother forbade her and her sisters to read any story, and said she would rather see them dead than that they should go to the theatre. As a Sunday School scholar the lady was given as a prize *The Gates Ajar*, a story that is really a disguised sermon. The mother angrily snatched the book from the child and flung it into the fire. 'But,' wrote the lady, 'my sisters and myself read stories on the sly all the same; sometimes, also on the sly, we went to the theatre. I know the deceitfulness was not good for us. I have now four daughters of my own. I hope I am a good Christian, but I recommend novels to my girls, and I take them to a theatre, when there are plays of healthy human interest, myself.' James Clarke, with his insight into human nature, his sensing of the spirit of the times and his sane judgment, felt that the time had come to break outworn prejudices that led to such deceit on the part of young people as that just described. He did not believe that Christians ought to be shut out from the drama of life as it is revealed in fiction. That is why he introduced the serial story into *The Christian World*, and in Emma Jane Worboise he found

a writer who was just fitted to convince, as far as they could be convinced, staid Puritan Nonconformists that a novel might be not only not frivolous and 'worldly,' but that it might help alike to the enlivenment and the edification of the religious public. Miss Worboise was no George Eliot, or Mrs. Henry Wood, or Mrs. Oliphant, but she 'served.' She could tell a love story in a staid way. Her weakness was a tendency to sermonize and theologize. The story would go swimmingly for half-a-dozen chapters, and then it would be held up for two or three instalments on endless talk on some aspect of the pious life or some moot controversial point. No doubt the older readers counted this for righteousness, but I fear the younger folk 'cut the cackle.' After all, in her way, Miss Worboise only anticipated H. G. Wells who, in his way, often forgets the story while he discourses at large on the universe, and propounds H. G. Wells's own panaceas for correcting the blunders of the original Creator. And George Bernard Shaw paddles the same canoe.

*The Christian World* led the way in the introduction of the serial story into religious journalism, and incidentally opened the path to a large number of men and women novelists who fleshed their prentice pens and earned good money in religious papers. Edna Lyall wrote several of her stories for *The Christian World*. She was more of an artist than Miss Worboise, and visualized her characters more realistically, but some of Miss Worboise's stories, in their volume form, still go on selling.

Certainly there was no lack of originality in the staff.

For fifteen years I shared a room with Alfred Harper, doyen of the staff. He was a Cheltenham man, ex-Editor of a Cheltenham paper. It was he who added to my knowledge of epitaphs one invented at the expense of his native town:

Here lie I and my seven daughters.  
We died o' drinking the Cheltenham waters.  
If we'd ha' stuck to Epsom Salts  
We shouldn't be lyin' in these 'ere vaults.

A genuine epitaph I picked up when, attending Baptist Missionary Society Centenary Meetings at Kettering, I walked through the churchyard with Thomas Allen Reed:

She was—words fail to say what she was:  
Think what a Christian should be, and she was that.

Harper was an advanced Radical, with Socialist leanings. He was secretary of a democratic club that passed sweeping resolutions demanding revolutionary reforms, but he told me it was impossible to get more than 300 of the 900 members to pay their half-a-crown a year subscription. That is an infirmity of noble democratic minds. G. J. Holyoake told of a Coöperative apostle who, in the early years of the movement, advocated Coöperative farm colonies. He travelled the country and worked crowded audiences to fever heats of enthusiasm by his word pictures of the Gardens of Eden those colonies would be. But the time came when the mercury suddenly dropped from 100 to below freezing point. It was when the apostle appealed for a collection to put a couple of sheep on one of the colonies. Combining the simplicity

of the dove with the cunning of the serpent the apostle, after a few experiences, called out, when the drop in the temperature came, 'Stewards, close the doors and let nobody leave till the price of those two sheep is raised.' The same conflict between enthusiasm and sacrifice is not unheard of in religious meetings. At a missionary meeting a man in a corner pew who had led the cheering, when the collection came during the singing of a hymn, was so rapt, with eyes turned heavenwards, in the singing of 'Fly abroad, thou glorious Gospel,' that he did not notice the proffered collection plate. The collector patted him on the shoulder, and said, 'Give it wings, my friend, give it wings!'

Harper had antiquarian interests. In fact, he was so antiquarian that he cherished ancient superstitions and mythological beliefs and poured contempt on modern science. Astronomy was sheer humbug, but there was a lot to be said for astrology. He was not convinced that the earth was round. He believed in witches and pixies. During slack half-hours we had many good-humoured arguments on such matters. He spent his lunch hours visiting curiosity shops. He would bring in a dirty canvas which he was convinced was an Old Master. His house walls were covered with priceless treasures picked up for a shilling or half-a-crown each. I suggested that he should get an expert to value the canvases. He repelled the suggestion with scorn. The expert would charge him five guineas, and offer to take the lot from him, as bogus, for the fee, and would make tens of thousands out of them. One day he brought in triumphantly a battered bassoon, with some of the component parts missing. He

was convinced that it had been played by a bassoonist member of Handel's orchestra at the first performance of *The Messiah*. Anyway, he bought his happiness much more cheaply than many do.

He did the 'Answers to Correspondents' column of *The Family Circle*. I had my doubts as to the genuineness of some of the questions, though the answers might be all right. For instance:

*Geraldine*. Yes, Pharaoh Necho reigned 765 to 740 B.C.

*Millicent*. Your friend misled you. Glass was invented by the Phœnicians about 500 B.C.

*Alice*. Knitting needles came into use about the year 1582.

I chaffed him one day about the antiquarian interests of the ladies. He said 'If I have a good answer, I am not going to waste it for want of a question.'

He was past eighty, and still 'going strong' when, one afternoon, I heard a tapping on his table behind me. Looking round, I saw him pointing to a slip of copy paper. In shaky letters he had written, 'I have had a stroke. I have lost my speech.' He was a genial soul, and I grieved to miss his companionship.

F. M. Holmes was another interesting original. He was an inveterate punster. He wrote 'rattling' stories for boys' papers—stories of Indians, grisly and brown bears and sea stories, with thrilling yarns of treasure hunts and fights with pirates, Spaniards and the French. I asked him one day where he got his experiences—had he ever been on the sea, or seen an Indian, or a bear at large? He confessed that he had never, to his knowledge, seen an Indian, that all he knew of bears he had learned at

the Zoo, and that his experience of the sea was gained from one or two trips from Folkestone to Boulogne. 'The less you know,' he said, 'the freer you are to give the reins to your imagination, and that is what the Editors want.'

Many men came and went during my years in Fleet Street. There was an ex-minister, for a short time sub-Editor of *The Literary World*. He was at the antipodes to Alfred Harper. To profess appreciation of the classics of literature, he held, was all affectation and cant. There were fifty living authors who were as good as the best fifty 'classics' in the whole of our literature. He had the courage to compile and print a list of the contemporary fifty, and persuaded most of them, I believe, that he was right. The glory of most of them has paled before the blinding lustre of half-a-thousand successors. Inflamed with a sudden disgust of civilization and a passion for the simple life in the wilds, the praiser of the Fifty took an uncleared 'section' in the Canadian backwoods. He manfully felled and uprooted trees. Then came the 'real estate' boom, and he was drawn into the maelstrom and did very well in selling 'lots' to optimistic buyers.

The principal leader writer, when I went on to *The Christian World*, was James Allanson Picton, M.P. for Leicester. He was a descendant of the General who fell at Waterloo. Picton, in religion and politics, was one of those men whose motto might be 'All for principle and the world well lost.' Religiously, he had reacted so violently from hardshell Nonconformist Evangelical dogmatism that he had developed a horror of all dogmatism. If he was anything, he was a 'Liberal' in the Unitarian sense of the word, but he disliked a negative as much as a

positive dogmatism. There is an intellectual pharisaism of criticism and negation, and Picton was always on his guard against it. He had the heart of a Martineau, the faith of 'the heart that has its reasons which the reason does not know.' The surface might be calm and cold, but there were swirling Gulf Stream warm currents in the depths. Old-fashioned readers of *The Christian World* were alarmed at the breadth of Picton's leaders. They did not see into the depths. There is always an overwhelming majority of religious people who do not like to be forced to test the foundations of what they believe they believe. They fear the house might have to be taken down and rebuilt on new foundations, a toilsome, an expensive and a painful process. They prefer to keep the mind closed on what they started with. That dislike of the open mind plays alike into the hands of the confident dogmatist and the destructive sceptic. The younger people discover the insecurity of the foundation and note the ominous cracks in the walls, not always concealed by skilful washes and artistic papers. Picton's leaders led many conservative readers to drop the paper, and I was told twenty years or more afterwards, by several veteran Nonconformists, that they had never looked at it since, and would not do so. And yet *The Christian World* never ceased to be 'Evangelical' in all that was essential to 'a living faith.'

University men who had done well at the Universities joined the staff, but with one exception, Basil Mathews, they did not shine. They were not quick enough 'at the uptak'; They usually wanted to read and meditate over the review books, and in the reviews were more eager

to express views of their own than to give an idea of what the book was about. One such man, son of a well-known minister, confessed that 'if he had a genius, it was for elegant leisure.' He soon sought the leisure in South Africa. He recalled as his greatest University triumph a fight with Lord Hugh Cecil, whom he had hit hard on the nose.

James Clarke had a weakness for 'lapsed ministers.' His heart was 'most wonderfully kind.' In those early days the Temperance movement was not so powerful as it has become in the churches. Some ministers with quite brilliant pulpit gifts drank not wisely but too well, with the inevitable result. A number of them, out of pity, were given work as contributors outside, and some of them wrote exceedingly well. But James Clarke fell an easy victim to any plausible down-and-outer who could tell an artistic pitiful tale. Once, entering the office, I met coming out a man I had known at Wolverhampton as a ne'er-do-weel pious cadger. He grinned at me and said, 'I have just seen Mr. James Clarke and he has given me £5.' Clarke had a weakness also for more or less persecuted heretics, whether in the Church of England or the Free Churches. I had the suspicion that some little ministers said things that angered the orthodox 'unco guid' with the direct object of exciting a little 'persecution' and becoming for the time heroes of *The Christian World*. But when there was a real 'persecution' of a good man who was seeking to broaden and elevate the ideas of God and humanity in the churches, Clarke was his chivalrous and courageous champion. His heroes were such men as Henry Ward Beecher—his guest at Caterham on his



last visit to England—Robertson of Brighton, Phillips Brooks and George Macdonald. With all his breadth there was depth, and never any bitterness against men who were still, theologically, in what he considered the Dark Ages. He made the most liberal allowances for human nature and the schools in whose atmosphere men had been raised. He recognized good work fully and gladly wherever he saw it. Thus, when the youthful Charles Haddon Spurgeon, uncouth in manner, self-confident, audacious, but with a marvellous preaching gift, and at the heart of him a glowing love for humanity, came to London, and the churches and religious papers looked askance at him, and the dailies jeered and sneered at him, James Clarke backed him in *The Christian World* as a preacher to be treated with sympathetic consideration, although Spurgeon's theological notions were intellectually abhorrent to him. He saw, as I came to see myself, after hearing and reading many Spurgeon sermons in his later years, that the theology counted for very little. According to the Calvinistic theology the eternal destiny of every man and woman to whom Spurgeon preached was settled in the divine decrees from before the foundation of the world, but Spurgeon never preached without the contradictory conviction that it was up to his hearers to accept or reject Christ's offer of salvation. James Clarke saw that the offer was being accepted by thousands, and that was enough to make him Spurgeon's whole-hearted champion.

One of Spurgeon's first students to leave the Pastors' College for a church was my old friend William Cuff, who died in 1926. Travelling once with William Cuff from

the North, he called my attention to a village in which he commenced his ministry. Mr. Cuff began life as a butcher's apprentice. He said the church secretary wrote to Spurgeon for his opinion on the student, before giving him a 'call.' The reply, he said, is kept framed in the vestry. It was 'My friend, William Cuff, can preach a sermon or kill a pig with any man in England.' When Mr. Cuff came to London, and the scheme for building the Shoreditch Tabernacle for him was launched, James Clarke started a *Christian World* subscription that raised £1,000. At the Tabernacle Mr. Cuff and his wife carried on a ministry for more than forty years that endeared them to every heart, even the hearts of the criminal population. They could go, said Mr. Cuff to me, to places where even the police went with fear and trembling. One night Mr. Cuff's house was burgled, and one or two valued pieces of silver were taken. The next Sunday evening Mr. Cuff referred to the robbery, expressed his sorrow, and said, half-humorously, that if the burglar was present and would return the silver, he would forgive him. After the service, when the people had gone, he noticed a man lingering in the church. He asked if he was in any trouble and took him into the vestry. The man said, 'It was I who broke into your house. I have only just come into the neighbourhood. I did not know who you were and what a friend you were to everybody. I will return the goods. For God's sake keep it quiet. If the men knew I had done it they would kill me.' Mr. Cuff invited the penitent to kneel while he said a word of prayer. In the end the man was 'soundly converted.'

The butcher was never expelled from Mr. Cuff by the minister. Every year he raised a fund to provide Christmas dinners for the neediest Shoreditch families. It was my pleasure for several years to write a Note which would bring in £30 or £40 to the fund. Mr. Cuff took the money to Smithfield Market and selected the carcasses himself, and he told me he spent one of his happiest days in the year in personally cutting up the carcasses into joints.

When President of the Baptist Union, at the close of a very long and exhausting session, when the audience was restless and numbers were going out on lunch intent, he made an appeal that the Fleet Street men have quoted as the greatest unconscious tribute ever paid to the Press. 'Brethren,' he said, 'I implore you to stay a few minutes longer, till we have had the Benediction. Remember you are in the presence not only of Almighty God, but of the Press.'

He was always a pet of Spurgeon's and told me many stories of him. There was an old Cornish lay preacher, also a pet of Spurgeon's, who on visits to London always called on Spurgeon. Once Spurgeon asked, 'How are you getting on with your preaching?' 'Oh, fine,' he said. 'I'll tell you what I do. I takes one o' your sermons. I leaves out bits o' yours, and puts in bits o' mine, and between the two of us they go down grand.'

Spurgeon had vacant spaces on his library shelves filled with bogus books, with waggishly invented titles, some 'taking off' his friends. One such book had for title *Cuff on the Head*.

James Clarke died when I had been three years on the staff, but he left a fragrant memory that was

a never-failing inspiration to those who had worked with him.

In 1891 there joined *The Christian World* Staff Rev. Jonathan Brierley, who, for twenty-one years, was my next-door neighbour. Broken health had compelled his retirement from the Congregational Church at Balham, and he had lived for some years at Neuchâtel in Switzerland. Thence he had sent essay articles that showed a broad outlook on life, a genial humanity, a very wide range of reading and remarkable psychological insight. He was invited by the second James (Greville) Clarke to join the staff. As 'J. B.,' he was not only an invaluable accession of strength to the paper, but through the paper he exercised an influence second to none in his time in clearing the thought of men and women in the churches, and converting to a reasonable faith many who had dropped out of the churches because they could no longer accept conventional traditional standards of orthodoxy. To 'J. B.' Fleet Street was a 'Cave of the Winds,' gusts of opinion blowing in from every quarter, and he found the gusts as bracing as the air of the Alps. He was an eclectic, finding good in every expression of the religious instinct. He was fascinated by the 'unfathomable mines' of the subconscious mind, and delighted to dwell on the surging up from the subconscious into the conscious of feelings, thoughts, impulses that were parts of our intellectual and spiritual inheritance from our forbears back to Adam. Though his nervous system was a wreck, there was never a more incorrigible optimist, a man who revelled more in the joy of living. He said once, 'When I get up in the morning, and am pulling on my trousers,

I say sometimes, "J. B.," you old rascal, you have much to be thankful for. God has done much better for you than you deserve!" ' He rivalled Dr. Robertson Nicoll in the range of his reading and in the abundance and felicity of his quotations. I wrote his *Life*, and traced his multifarious interests in the quotations from books he was reading jotted in penny note-books, one of which was always in a pocket. His son, the Rev. Harold Brierley, told me that writing down a quotation stamped it on his father's memory. He wrote a microscopic script, and got into five slips of copy the usual two columns and a bit of an essay, the length of which would have taken at least twenty slips of my own stuff. He vexed the souls of the 'comps,' as I did in another way. I had to use a magnifying glass to read much of his MS. remains. 'J. B.' simply chortled when a series of articles on religious subjects appeared in *The Referee* and the editor was snowed under with letters expressing the intense interest and lively appreciation of them by the readers. It confirmed his view—long shared by myself—that there is a vast amount of religion in the composition of people who are not regarded by the churches as religious. To 'J. B.' Fleet Street was as thrillingly romantic as Bagdad in the days of Haroun Al Raschid. Every man and woman he passed was a drama in real life, if only there were a Shakespeare to see it. And all nature intoxicated him as it did Wordsworth. He told how the owner of a great and beautiful estate proudly showed him round. 'I possess the estate,' said the owner. 'And I possess the landscape,' said 'J. B.' He claimed all beauty, in humanity or in nature, for his own. If he were living to-day he might

congratulate himself that he possesses the landscape without being liable for the taxes, rates and death duties on the estate. He was a genial companionable colleague, though we could not always soar with him into 'the heavenlies.'

It would be unpardonable to pass over W. D. Milsom, who joined the staff at about the same time as myself, and retired when I did. He came from a Newbury paper, and for many years was chief sub-editor. To him that drudgery was divine. He simply lived for *The Christian World*. He had that patient genius for detail that is invaluable to a paper. His patience was unlimited. It was his business to sift each week matter enough to fill a score of papers of the size. Hundreds of outside contributors and would-be contributors found him courteous even when their work had to be severely 'blue-pencilled' or 'returned with thanks.' His health was breaking when he left, and he passed away in 1930.

Just before my time there was an office-boy named Rymer at *The Christian World*. He served as 'printers' devil' carrying 'copy' and proofs between Fleet Street and the printing office. He took in the boys' paper in which Stevenson's *Treasure Island* was appearing in instalments. On the weekly days of publication he was so breathlessly impatient to follow the development of the story that he delayed his journeys while under some arch or in some passage he devoured the instalment. The delays lost him his job. He passed over to the Sampson Low firm of which, when I came to know him as a friend when we were both middle-aged, he had risen to be business manager. He told me the story himself. He sent for my

judgment MSS. of religious books submitted to his firm.

When people called 'To see the editor'—and their name was legion—it was my mission to receive them, hear what they had got to say, and if they were mere time-wasters, as nineteen times out of twenty they were, I was, in the way least likely to hurt their feelings, to 'show them the door.'

For thirty-eight years I represented *The Christian World* at the Assemblies of the Congregational and Baptist Unions, missing only one Baptist Assembly through 'an interesting event' at home. In the later years I was looked on as an immemorial institution of such Assemblies, as also of the National Free Church Council Assemblies. I witnessed many 'men of the week' leap into fame, some of whom failed to perpetuate their glory, but others in due course became Union or National Free Church Council Presidents. In 1886 the Secretary of the Congregational Union was Dr. Alexander Hannay, whose patient statesmanship developed the Union from the survival of the obstinate and suspicious Independency to an effective representative democratic body, with an executive capable of working out and putting through schemes that consolidated the denomination and enabled it to diminish the scandal of ministers starved in the interest of the 'sacred principle' of any church to call whom it liked to its ministry, even if it could not so much as 'make him passing rich' on £50 or £60 a year. Union meetings in those years were certainly much livelier than the sedate gatherings of later years. Storms in tea-cups were expected and enjoyed. Often enough, with amendments 'thick as autumn leaves in Vallombrosa,' the

chairman got completely lost. It was good to see Dr. Guinness Rogers—like the Homeric hero, ‘good at the battle-axe’—take imperious command of the meeting. He was a consummate diplomat as well as a bonnie fighter. He usually succeeded in extricating the delegates from the jungle of amendments and restoring calm. In Dr. J. D. Jones he has had a successor with the same agility of mind, but more suavity of manner, and at least equal courage, who has built up the denomination on the foundations so well and truly laid by Dr. Hannay.

At those Union Assemblies the social fellowship was of priceless value in revealing the humanity of the men. It was good, after tiring days of Sessions and evening meetings, to gather in groups at the hotel and relax in story-telling by accomplished raconteurs, and in that mock chaffing which is the test of genuine good fellowship. To companionship in such genial groups I owed many valued friendships with men whose names were household words in the churches. When Sir John Maclure was chairman of the Congregational Union he was one of the best of good fellows in those evening gatherings. One evening he and I kept the ball rolling with capping stories. We felt he had condescended to our terrestrial level when he propounded the query, ‘If you were a condemned heretic and were given the choice, which would you prefer—a cold chop or a hot stake?’ The group gradually lessened till only three were left. When I declared, ‘I really must go to bed now,’ Dr. Maclure pleaded, ‘Don’t go yet. It is still early.’ A journalist friend, who had two boys at Mill Hill School, told me how, when boys struck against an unpopular



master, and refused to go in one morning, Maclure came out, stood without looking at the rebels, pointed silently with thumb over his shoulder to the School entrance, and the boys meekly went in.

Always my very full reports were done in the friendliest spirit. In articles of 'Impressions' and Notes, however, I exercised the liberty of criticism where it seemed needed. That criticism sometimes provoked protests, for many church leaders, like a certain theatrical 'star,' demand only 'Praise, praise, praise.' Anyway, I 'wrote up' for all I was worth the adventurous 'Forward Movements' of the two Unions, and *The Christian World* was thanked for the influence on the public opinion of the denominations. As the only journalist admitted to the Council meetings of the Congregational Union, I witnessed the launching of the big schemes by Dr. J. D. Jones, and saw how he waxed from strength to strength in the confidence and affection of his denomination. He knew always that I would never 'give away' anything that was not intended for the public eye.

## CHAPTER VI

### A HUNDRED THOUSAND SERMONS

*Preparation for Editorship—Canon Liddon and the 'Grand Style'—Scott-Holland's Express Speed—Boyd-Carpenter's Richness—Dean Farrar's Multi-lingual Quotations—'The Larger Hope'—'The Common People' and 'Good Parochial Sermons'—The 'Pulpit' as Introducer—Pulpit 'Psychiatry'—Half-power Preachers—How Long should a Sermon be?—9,000 words of Verbal Inspiration—'That Old Sermon Barrel'—The Greatest Fiasco—The 'Pulpit's' World-wide Service—'Howlers'—'On the List' of Americans—Help to Lay Preachers—'After many Days'*

TOWARDS the close of my thirty-eight years' Editorship of *The Christian World Pulpit*, when I told minister friends that I must have read a hundred thousand sermons, surely the world record at the time, the spontaneous joke was, 'And are you still a Christian?' I hoped that some remainder of early faith had saved me from pure paganism. The fact is that quite early in youth I developed an appetite for sermons. I had taken in the *Pulpit* in my Dudley and Wolverhampton days, and later had devoured the whole of Jeremy Taylor, and many volumes of the Seventeenth Century Puritan preachers, with their 'heavenly length,' their multitude of 'divisions' and their display of familiarity with Latin and Greek Fathers and secular writers. I had read also in Greek volumes of Chrysostom's expositions of the Gospels, in German

sermons of Luther and in French sermons of the classic pulpit orators, Massillon, Fléchier and Bourdaloue. Always I loved to get heart to heart with the man behind the sermons, and it did not take much insight to discover that whatever might be the theological school or the ecclesiastical association of the men, the preacher in all ages, if he was worthy to be called a preacher, was 'brother under the skin' to the truly called preachers of the Gospel in all ages and countries. It was my business also to review volumes of sermons and to read for the publishing side of the Clarke House manuscripts of volumes of sermons submitted for consideration. Sermons to me were a form of sacred literature that was as well worth reading and enjoying as any other form. My editorship brought me into friendly relationship with scores of the 'stars' of the contemporary pulpit, and with such of these as were my personal friends I had many intimate talks on the qualifications of the preacher to meet the needs of the people who are faced with the problems of keeping their faith alive and warm to-day, as compared with preaching that might have held and influenced congregations that have long since been resting after their more or less weary pilgrimages through life in the green churchyards. There has always been a survival of such preaching which is relished by a remnant of hearers who distrust any departure from what they were brought up on in their youth. There is another school of preachers who are so intent on preaching to 'the modern mind'—are so obsessed with the idea that to get hold of 'the Young People' they must adopt and give out the latest ingenious attempts to explain away Articles of the

Evangelical faith by which devout souls have been fed and warmed and experienced 'the power of God unto salvation to all who believe'—that they have forgotten all about that power and failed to find the way to the never-changing heart of not only 'the common people' but of the supposed 'Intelligenza.' It has seemed to me that many 'Modernists' lack the background of Christian history and the experience of the faithful through the ages, to the detriment of their Evangelical catholicity. And yet, thank God, there are always preachers who have found how to communicate to the hearts of their hearers the comforting and enabling power that has warmed their own hearts and been the 'needs be' that made the ministry their only possible career.

Founded in 1872, *The Christian World Pulpit* was an outgrowth of *The Christian World*. There had been before, and there have been since, attempts to carry on papers giving verbatim reports of sermons, but they struck on the reefs of denominational exclusiveness or some single school of theological thought. The inevitable result was that the readers were a limited circle to begin with, and the circle became small by degrees and beautifully less till it dwindled to a point and the point faded into nothingness. James Clarke made *The Christian World Pulpit* as catholic as his own heart and mind. Sermons of all denominations and all schools were included and there was a well-balanced mixture in each number. The early volumes are rich in sermons of such men as Thomas Binney, Canon Liddon, just coming into his own, Dr. R. W. Dale, Rev. A. F. Barfield with his homely little Homilies, Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, of whose church at

Grafton Square Clarke, then living on the North Side of Clapham Common, was for a time a member; Rev. T. A. Gasquoine, Rev. Samuel Pearson, Dr. Landels, Rev. Baldwin Brown and—first always in Clarke's unstinted admiration—Henry Ward Beecher, whose 'Yale Lectures on Preaching' were published as a whole in the *Pulpit* and did much to set British preachers on the right road. Beecher taught always that the preacher must discover and develop his personality, the genius which is in every man, but which is mostly overlaid, the man becoming just a standardized item, with no more 'Identity disk' than is found in a sack of beans. When I took over the editorship Beecher was in his last years, but many of his later sermons appeared under my editorship; and when he had passed away his successor, Dr. Lyman Abbott, contributed his sermons, illuminating, thought-stimulating and heart-warming, for many years. Another American whom I greatly liked was Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, with his genius for the simple and telling exposition of the ways of reaching the heart of the average man and woman, and his fatherly warnings to preachers who have failed to get anything that seemed like harvests from their sowing. Like Dr. John Clifford, Cuyler was a fervent believer in 'Personal Evangelism.' 'He had more faith,' he said, in one of the articles I published, 'in getting fruit by hand-picking than by trying to shake the tree.' He wrote to me more than once expressing the pleasure it gave him in being thus able to reach the British public.

Liddon was at the peak of his power at St. Paul's when I began my editorship. His sermons were specially

reported for me. They were half as long again as the average sermon, but there were men in those days and after who never wearied their congregations. The man who has 'the fire in his bones and cannot contain' dissipates all coldness in his hearers. Liddon was about the last of the 'grand style' pulpit orators.

In later years Scott-Holland at St. Paul's and Boyd-Carpenter at Westminster Abbey did not find anything like 'ample room and verge enough' in the average sermon's 'scanty plot of ground.' Both these were reported by expert shorthand writers. They needed to be very expert. Thomas Allen Reed's firm supplied the men or the women. Scott-Holland was torrential in his delivery. He must sometimes have reached two hundred words a minute as against the good average of a hundred and forty of the normal preacher. He usually repeated at least half-a-dozen times in varied phraseology the things he wanted to sink in. It was only so indeed that the 'ordinary listener,' as the B.C.C. would call him, was able to keep pace with the preacher. There was glow always in his sermons, for the man himself was volcanic, but the flame was sometimes in danger of being damped down by the overplus of words. Said a reporter to me, after he had had an exceptional gruelling to keep up with him, 'Scott-Holland never uses one word when six will do.' It was worth while from the business point of view to give the space to his sermons, for a Number with Scott-Holland in it usually sold a thousand extra.

Long also were the sermons of Boyd-Carpenter. His delivery, however, was more leisurely. He was a man of wide reading with a taste for the finest in literature. As

Bishop of Ripon he had always used his tedious railway journeys on diocesan work in reading Shakespeare, the poets in general, the best in fiction and other literature that got him well away from that concentration on purely professional clerical matter that has been the bane of so many preachers, both of the Church of England and the Free Churches. I have looked round many ministers' libraries and have been dismayed at their poverty in real books, books of 'power,' as against printed matter in covers. Boyd-Carpenter appreciated the colour, the music, the drama of the spoken word, as they are all found in the Bible books, and in the lives of the men or women of all the ages, in whatever class. He got that colour, music and drama into his sermons, which were as relishable to hearers as any preaching of the time.

Another Abbey preacher of whom I had dozens of sermons reported was Canon Farrar, afterwards Dean of Canterbury. His *Life of Christ*, with its riot of local colour and its attempts to picture in the liveliest tints the Person of the Master, and the 'persons of the drama' of His story, had been a prize won by me in a Sunday School Teachers' examination, and whatever criticism may be made of the *Life* it made a lasting impression on my susceptible mind. Farrar was a greater 'Teaser' to reporters than even Scott-Holland. He not only raced through his manuscript at 'Flying Scotsman' speed, but he sprinkled it with quotations from several languages. There would be in Greek three or four lines of 'that memorable passage in the *Antigone* of Sophocles, in Italian 'that unforgettable Terzetto in the *Purgatorio*' or a titbit in Latin from Lucretius or Virgil. He could not

eliminate from the pulpit his old school-masterish habit of trying to communicate his own devotion to the classics. No doubt not two in a thousand of his hearers understood the quotations, but it was a joy to hear them rolled like sweet morsels under his tongue. He was willing enough to write out for the reporter the luscious morsels, but in reading the manuscript and the proofs it was well that I was able to stop 'howlers.' His four sermons on 'The Larger Hope' had, a little before my editorship, appeared in the *Pulpit* and had raised a theological hornets' nest about his ears. There were crowds in the churches who believed that to dispose in such cavalier fashion of a hell without prospect of purgatorial redemption meant robbing the Gospel of its most powerful appeal to recalcitrant sinners, and it meant robbing the missionaries to the 'Dark places of the earth where are the habitations of cruelty' of their tremendous argument that 'millions every year who have never heard of Christ are dying for ever lost.' Farrar's sermons, anyway, always added to the *Pulpit's* circulation.

It was my endeavour to give adequate space to the men who were faithfully serving the pulpits of the average churches, though they might not be 'stars.' After all, the 'common people' live more on wholesome and nourishing daily bread than on cakes and pastries. Some of those average 'faithful pastors' got their first hearing outside their localities in the *Pulpit* and I believe it helped them not only in the churches, but opened the way to access to other pulpits of which many of them became the occupants. A sermon in the *Pulpit*, I was often told, made a big impression on deacons in influencing



the giving of a hearing to men who sought the opportunity of 'Preaching with a view.' Often I was implored to use a sermon with that object. Unless the sermon was good enough to meet the minimum standard of the *Pulpit* I had reluctantly to refuse. It would only have served to humiliate a man if the church was one that had been accustomed to a quality beyond his reach.

The argument for including 'good average' men was reinforced by a clergyman who called to see me. 'To us parish priests,' he said, '*The Christian World Pulpit* is a very present help in time of need. We are so rushed by keeping going the work of the parish, our church schools and Societies, visitation of the sick and lax church-goers, and the like, that little time or mind is left for filling up by systematic reading and sermon preparation. Here is where your paper comes to our aid. It is often better to preach a good sermon by another man than a bad one of our own. We like to read the sermons of the Bishops, Canons and the Nonconformist top-notchers, but unfortunately they are not the sermons we can use. Will you please give us more good parochial sermons?' I did my best to supply that demand. A Yorkshire Rector, who was adept at the 'good parochial' manner, told me that to his knowledge one of his sermons in the *Pulpit* had been preached on the same Sunday in seven churches. And why not? After the Reformation books of 'Homilies' were provided by the heads of the Church for pulpit use.

The *Pulpit* circulated largely in the United States and the British Dominions. It was my privilege to introduce American and Dominion preachers to British readers, and in not a few cases the introduction led to vacation

visits to this country, and to preaching engagements in many of our churches. Dr. Fort Newton, minister of the City Temple during the War years, was one of the Americans whose quality I was able to make known. It was he who induced Miss Maude Royden to become his colleague and so started her on the career that led to her exhilarating and widely influential ministry at the Eccleston Guild House.

I have an impression that, generally speaking, the preachers of fifty to sixty years ago were, to borrow a recent neologism, better psychiatrists than are, also generally speaking, the preachers of to-day. They were physicians and surgeons of the soul. They were largely in the succession of the men whose glory was to be 'faithful pastors.' They were in intimate touch with their people, and the people have much to teach the preacher which he can never learn in college or from books. It was their concern, not so much to pour the heady new wine of the ever-changing 'modern thought' into the old bottles of the Evangelical faith, as to make the Evangelical faith a living faith that warmed the heart and ruled the whole life of the believer. There was something in the men that put saving power into their preaching. Their hearers knew that they were living with all the force of their consecrated personality the faith that had mastered themselves.

There has been a correspondence in *The Christian World* (1932) on the tendency of many present-day preachers to preach in tones so subdued and with such a tendency to tail off sentences inaudibly that much of what they are saying does not reach half-way down the church

and the slightly hard of hearing miss most of it. That tendency to keep half the vocal power in reserve has the unfortunate psychological effect of making the congregation feel that the preacher is not greatly interested in his own sermons, and it is only a short step to the feeling that he is not vitally interested in his own Gospel. A lady who was my week-end hostess said, 'I have often wished that when our minister is preaching I could get into the pulpit and let off a cracker to wake him up.' A half-awake preacher is likely to have a drowsy congregation. The preacher need not be a Boanerges, but he should certainly endeavour to make his voice carry, and carry with the impression of conviction behind it, to the back pews. My own voice happens to be of good carrying quality, trained by much dictation to shorthand writers and by a fair amount of open-air preaching, and in early years by practice in reading and reciting aloud. It has always been a joy when some elderly lady or gentleman has said at the close of a service, 'I did enjoy your sermon. It is the first I have really heard for the last six months.' To have merely heard won their gratitude. The sermon may have been poor enough, but the sound of it made it a 'song without words.'

How long should a sermon be? I was asked this question once in a vestry while waiting with three ministers to go on the platform. The ministers suggested from twenty-five to thirty-five minutes. When pressed for an opinion, I said it was not really a question of how long a sermon was, but of how long it seemed to be. The reply seemed to commend itself. It may be true that modern congregations are impatient of length, and have

neither the appetite nor the trained attention which were common in days when there were fewer distractions. In the seventeenth century the congregation felt itself to be defrauded if the preacher did not give them at least an hour and a half.

I have in my library and have read with delight volumes of the sermons of Jeremy Taylor and of that quaint London preacher, Thomas Adams, of the time when the Pilgrim Fathers were sojourning in Holland before starting on their *Mayflower* adventure. Not only does each sermon exceed in length three to four of our modern sermons put together, but the preachers find it almost impossible to tear themselves away from their subject, and often it is 'continued in our next' like a serial story, over three or four sermons of 'heavenly length.' Of Dr. John Howe, author of *The Living Temple*, it is said that his services ranged from six to seven hours, with an interval for refreshment, and he would preach from four to five hours on end. It was the custom then for preachers to have an hour-glass in the pulpit. Hugh Peters, Oliver Cromwell's favourite preacher, would at the end of the third hour take up the hour-glass, turn it over, and say, 'Brethren, let us take another glass.' And the brethren could not have too many glasses.

There have been modern preachers who could not be cramped. I was told of a great Welsh preacher, a President of the National Free Church Council a few years before the War, that he 'was like a Dreadnought. He wanted at least an hour's sea room to turn round in.' Dr. Fairbairn was so rich in matter, and so inspired by his subjects and congregations, that he forgot how the hands of the clock

were turning round. I myself heard him preach for an hour and twenty minutes, and it was said that at an afternoon service in a famous seaside resort he went on for two hours and a quarter, failing to notice that most of the congregation had quietly slipped out, for it was difficult for an untrained hearer to endure more than an hour of the strain of preaching that made a constant demand on unremitting attention.

Dr. W. L. Watkinson was a preacher of another type. Nobody ever felt that he preached too long, though he might go, and very often did, well over the hour. Dr. Watkinson, with his exquisite illustrations, his whimsical quips, his famous sniffs, and his own rollicking enjoyment of his preaching, kept the worst listener in the congregation thoroughly alive. He enjoyed himself so much sometimes that he did not end when he had finished the sermon, but drew out of the treasure of his memory favourite bits from other sermons that were deftly worked in to 'keep the ball rolling.' I heard him also preach on one occasion for an hour and twenty minutes, and nobody who was not called away on urgent business wished he would leave off.

Somebody once said to me that there are twenty-minute sermons that seem to last half an eternity, while there are one-hour sermons that do not seem to have lasted twenty minutes. This is the real test. It was an Anglican Rector of the half-an-eternity sermon type who, one summer Sunday morning, suddenly stopped at the end of ten minutes and said apologetically, 'I am sorry I cannot continue, but I have just remembered that my dog got into my study, found my sermon box open and tore

up and ate the remainder of the manuscript.' The story goes that within a fortnight half-a-dozen churchwardens, from parishes afflicted with similar preachers, had called at the Rectory to beg a pup from the next litter.

A sermon is shortened to the hearers if there are some windings in the road. A hearer of a certain minister, a very faithful pastor and greatly liked, said to me, 'The trouble with him is that you can always see three miles along the road in front of him.' The men who are filling churches are those who, in addition to having a Gospel rich in spiritual vitamins to preach, give to their hearers agreeable surprises, lead them for relief up pleasant by-paths, and make them feel sorry at the end of thirty to forty minutes that it is over.

I rarely, for that reason of length, used a sermon of the brilliant Principal Peter T. Forsyth, of Hackney College. The bane of Dr. Forsyth was his incurable addiction to epigrammatic expression. If Pope 'wrote in numbers for the numbers came,' Forsyth talked in epigrams for the epigrams came. I hurt his feelings the first time I reported him by saying that his address was 'fire-works in a fog,' but really his electronic scintillation 'dazzled by excess of light' and left the listeners often dazed. He became somewhat less radiant in his later years, but though his sentences were usually satisfying in themselves, his paragraphs were often of cross-word puzzle difficulty. He would not submit to editorial curtailment or suggestions. Once he sent me a sermon of such length as would have crowded out two others. I asked him in the most delicate way if he could not reduce the length. His reply was, 'The sermon has nine

thousand words, and not one of them could be omitted.' The queer thing was that his judgments were often so sound, and his instincts so right, but as editor I could only sigh and regret inability to give the amount of space demanded by such 'astronomical longitude,' as Dr. Parker might have said. I feared, anyhow, that nine thousand words would overtax the capacity of even minister readers. I found that ministers were not such patient sitters under the preaching of long-winded brethren as laymen might imagine.

Another question on which my opinion was often invited was how often, and over what a period, could a sermon be effectively preached? An American humorist, it seemed to me, cast the greatest light on the problem when he wrote that 'It would be the salvation of many preachers if somebody would cast a lighted match into that old sermon barrel.' A printed remark of my own, that 'Nothing ages so quickly as a sermon. In six months it is bald and toothless,' came back quoted with endorsement in half-a-dozen religious papers of the United States and Australia. Should old sermons, then, never be repeated after the season of their creation? It depends on whether the heat of their generation can be revived. After the written sermon has been put away the heat dies down, and before long the paper becomes the shroud of the corpse. The sermons that may be very much alive long after their first delivery are probably never written at all, but are consigned to the depths of the subconscious mind. At any time, under suitable stimulus, such sermons may be reborn, subject, of course, to modification in the revived inspiration. More than once,

to illustrate by personal experience, a new sermon I had meant to preach seemed to 'fade out' on the way to the church, or even during the service, and a sermon preached once ten or a score of years before, and never since, leapt again to the light, with an imperative urge to be preached, and I had the best of good times. Professional scribbler though I was, I could never get heat into written sermons, and even notes switched off any inspiration that might be in them. I must keep my eyes on the eyes of the congregation, and from those eyes seemed to come inspiration. The worst fiasco I remember in hearing a sermon was when an American preacher with a well-known name, then minister of a London church, preached the Baptist Missionary Society's annual sermon. He began with the Fall of Man, when 'all died' in the sin of Adam, and worked through the promises of redemption in the Old Testament towards the 'New Adam' when 'all should be made alive' in Jesus Christ. At the end of twenty minutes twos and threes began to slip out, then tens and dozens, then scores. The preacher began turning over pages half-a-dozen at a time, but apparently long before he had reached his goal he realized that he might end with only the unfortunate people on the rostrum, and he cut off the tail. I surmised that he had fished up from the bottom of that 'old sermon barrel' a thesis of some sort from the days of his studentship or in his first ministerial charge.

The reading of reporters' typescripts of sermons, and of the printers' proofs, was an irksome but very necessary business. The most expert shorthand-writers were engaged, but nothing is so difficult to get as quotations, most of all of poetry, and sometimes, not being familiar



with names, there were 'howlers' in the transcript. Thus, I was puzzled, for a time, over a reference to 'Frederick Tennyson Morris,' till I remembered the great Broad Church preacher; and the statement that 'life originated in the primeval Ouse' undeservedly magnified even the 'Great Ouse.'

From all quarters of the world letters came to me telling how great a boon *The Christian World Pulpit* was to overseas preachers, who were kept in touch with the best preaching in the Homeland, to settlers living in the 'back blocks' of hinterlands cut off from all religious 'means of grace,' from missionaries in the foreign fields for whom friends at home paid annual subscriptions. And at home there were the infirm, the aged and others unable to attend any church, or who could only do so on the rarest occasions. Dr. J. H. Shakespeare told me that during his Norwich ministry he had known devout farmers who read each night a sermon from the *Pulpit* and on Saturday or Sunday nights read a sermon aloud at family worship. They grieved if there were not enough sermons in a number to carry them through the week. Principals of Colleges told me that among prized treasures of the College Libraries were complete sets to date of the half-yearly volumes.

From the American circulation of the *Pulpit* and the sale of some of my books in the States I was alarmed to discover, in the summer Vacation time of American ministers, that I was on the list, with 'The Cheshire Cheese,' Goldsmith's tomb in the Temple Churchyard, the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, of objects to be seen and 'ticked off.' Ministers called with prepared

questionnaires, some of the questions being the largest order, as 'Will you tell me what have been the religious developments in your country during the last twenty-five years, what is the present religious situation and what do you think of the probable developments during the next twenty-five years?' As well as possible, in five minutes or so, I rattled off something to satisfy them. Several times, a couple of months later, I received a marked copy of an American paper, with a page report of the interview. My colleagues joyed in jeering when they read, 'I found Mr. Jeffs one of the most courteous and best-informed gentlemen I have ever met'—usually this would be pasted up in the room shared with me by Arthur Porritt and my son Ernest.

Early in the century I set texts and subjects to lay preachers for competitions in Sermon and Address-making. A volume of selections from the best was published with the title *Modern Minor Prophets*. I learned in later years that several of the competitors had been so encouraged that they responded to an increasingly urgent vocation to enter the ministries of their churches. At least half-a-dozen of these men came to see me during the War wearing the khaki of Chaplains to the Forces or Red Cross workers on the field. One such man, whom I had also helped as a student in the Primitive Methodist Central Council Courses of study, deeply moved me. He wore the Red Cross badge. He said he wanted to tell me that at an advanced Dressing Station a man was brought in dangerously wounded, unconscious, plastered with mud and blood. It was my old student who dealt with him. He found from his identity disk that his name was

'Jeffs.' When the wounded man was conscious, the dresser asked, 'Are you by any chance related to Mr. Harry Jeffs?' 'Yes, I am his son,' was the answer.

That son has been since 1926 my successor as Editor of *The Christian World Pulpit*, and he is Assistant Editor of *The Christian World*. He is likely to learn for the first time from this book the story told to me by the Red Cross Man.

## CHAPTER VII

### POLITICAL PERSONALITIES

*Disraeli and Gladstone—Two Gladstone Crushes—The 'Awful Eye'—Lord Salisbury and 'The Ruling Families'—Campbell-Bannerman—Bonar Law—Lloyd George's Entrée—Keir Hardie—His Christian Appeal to Continental Socialists—Joseph Arch—Will Crooks—Some of his Stories—Felix Volkovsky—'The Dynamite of Ideas'*

WHEN I entered journalism the great Victorians were still in the forefront of the political field. It was still the Two Party system, which vastly simplified politics. The Labour movement was coming on, but so far the Labour leaders were good Radical Liberals, level-headed men, sturdy British Individualists, intent on securing the power of 'collective bargaining,' but relying on the strength of organized labour as against organized capitalism. In constituencies of a predominantly industrial character Labour Liberals—'Lib-Labs' as they were afterwards called—were elected to Parliament, such men as Macdonald of Stafford, Thomas Burt and Joseph Arch. Keir Hardie changed all that when he invented the Independent Labour Party.

Gladstone and Disraeli were still the protagonists on the political stage. Gladstone loathed Disraeli as a political Mephistopheles, without sincere convictions or scruples, an adventurer, a Condottier who had sold himself to the

'rich and noble,' and as is the way with successful Condottieri had become the velvet-gloved master of his masters. Disraeli was a consummate master of the art of showy popular appeal. He anticipated Lloyd George's gift for picturesque analogies and Winston Churchill's coinage of sonorous mouth-filling phrases. He 'went for' Gladstone as Demosthenes and Aeschines slanged each other in the speeches 'De Corona.' He on his side doubted Gladstone's sincerity. He believed Gladstone always 'had an ace up his sleeve.' The two men were psychologically incapable of understanding and appreciating each other. Gladstone had captured the Nonconformists by his devout religion, his strict Sabbatarianism, the example of his domestic life, his flaming passion for freedom, his St. George-like crusades on behalf of the persecuted Bulgarians and Armenians. He was supposed to have retired from the leadership, but the Bulgarian Atrocities agitation and the Midlothian Campaign showed that he was the leader *de jure*, and it is doubtful if he required much pressure to yield to the demand that he should become the leader *de facto* after the 1880 victory.

Disraeli's Manifesto at that Election was a masterpiece of rhetorical vituperation. Gladstone was 'marching through rapine and ruin to the disintegration of the Empire.' His speech-making was 'a dreary drip of dilatory declamation.' But Gladstone had 'The People' with him. The Nonconformists, who had many humiliating grievances still to be removed, were the backbone of the Liberal Party. As Dean Inge put it, when the Free Churches' 'block' was splintered into political fragments,

'every Nonconformist chapel was a committee room of the Liberal Party.' To Gladstone's return to the Premiership, borne on the crest of the 1880 Election wave, and the imperiousness of the Grand Old Man in his last period of active political life, most of the subsequent troubles within the Liberal Party are attributable. There were disappointed ambitions. There were powerful young men in the party whom Mr. Gladstone distrusted, disliked and slighted. He was a sudden convert to Home Rule for Ireland, and being 'an old man in a hurry,' and wanting to crown his career by settling the Irish question once for all, he rushed it without sufficient preparation either of public opinion or of the opinion of his own Government and party. To his impatient hurry and imperiousness was due the split in which Joseph Chamberlain and John Bright, who might have been expected to be his enthusiastic lieutenants in the Home Rule Campaign, appeared as leaders of Liberal Unionism, and carried with them a large section of the influential Nonconformists, who saw Rome behind Irish Nationalism. Never since has either Liberalism or Nonconformity been able to speak with a single voice.

I did not see or hear Gladstone till after I left Wolverhampton. I associate him with crushes that confirmed my chronic claustrophobia. At Glasgow, during the 1886 Election campaign, he was to speak from the balcony of a Sauchiehall Street hotel. I stood in the crowd, which thickened and thickened till the movement of an arm became impossible. I feared the cracking of ribs, and vainly tried to work my way out. I was too concerned for my ribs to be able to listen to the five minutes' speech,

but he stirred the Clydesiders as a Bruce or a Wallace fired their ancestors. No orator has better understood how to pierce the armour of the Scot and speed his flame-tipped arrows to the Scottish heart.

When the Golden Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone was celebrated by a reception at the National Liberal Club I was in the endless procession that filed past and shook hands with them. At the party celebration at the N.L.C. of the 1892 victory I stood in the packed smoking-room to hear Mr. Gladstone and his leading colleagues speak. It was a stewing summer night. The windows were closed. The atmosphere became as that of the Black Hole of Calcutta. There were shouts of 'Open the windows!' Two or three fainted, and the proceedings were stopped while they were somehow got out. I felt myself 'going off' and went off. I found myself in the lobby with ice in my mouth and a doctor administering snuff. He told me, when I was able to thank him, that he had practised on the West Coast of Africa, and the snuff was a speciality that might have restored consciousness to the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. There were leaderettes in many papers the next morning on the narrow escape from disaster. I was one of a dozen or so who had been carried out.

I never heard the G.O.M. on a great occasion. When I did hear him I was impressed more by the man himself than by his oratory. Surely, never has a nobler-looking figure appeared on our political stage! His resonant, flexible voice, the energy and grace of his gesture, the swift eagle motion of his good grey head, and that 'awful eye' which Dr. J. H. Jowett sometimes referred to,

fascinated the onlooker. As reporter I experienced, of course, the usual difficulty of transcribing the interminable Gladstonian sentences, many of which needed to be cut up into three for the paper. The length was not noticeable in the delivery.

The first party leader whom I reported was Lord Salisbury. He spoke at the Wolverhampton Conservative Club after a luncheon. I got near to a window looking out on to a garden. I 'wrote up' at a gallop for the next edition of the evening paper. As messenger boys were not to be admitted, I dropped ten feet into the garden, made a bee-line for the office and had the satisfaction of seeing our paper out a quarter of an hour before the rival Conservative organ.

When the Imperial Institute was opened I studied Lord Salisbury from the Press Stand as he slowly walked in. I had been a diligent student of our own history and the history of other countries. That solid figure, with the large head—Sir Oliver Lodge's head reminds me of it—that slight bowing of the shoulders as of an Atlas bearing the globe, that calm, impassive face struck me as the embodiment of the English 'ruling class.' He was Cecil of the Cecils. Liberal though I have been, I have always admired the old 'ruling class.' There was a stern sense of duty to the country in it. Its sons were trained for public service. It was never, by any means, a purely class and Tory party. It produced great Whig as well as great Tory leaders, men who faced and fought absolute kings, or kings who were the catspaws of reactionary groups or of frivolous and corrupt courtiers. There were great political philosophers in the class, who worked out the



principles of a democratic constitution, and prepared the people progressively for the making of 'the bounds of freedom wider yet.' A 'ruling class,' of course, could not permanently monopolize the government, but it proved the ballast that has steadied the ship of State and enabled it to sail on an even keel. The landed interest, the County families, often refreshed their blood and their coffers by inter-marriages with the families of merchant princes and captains of industry. Scores of families with 'Norman blood' have strains of London Lord Mayoral blood in their pedigrees. That has helped to bridge the gulf between the Noblesse and the Bourgeoisie and to democratize 'our old nobility.' Perhaps some of the liking I had for Lord Salisbury was due to the fact that, while not yet heir to the Marquisate, he took to leader-writing journalism in order to be able to marry the sooner a lady whose father was a Judge, but who was comparatively poor. Those 'ruling families' of ours have no counterpart in any other country. The closest analogy is the Patrician families of Rome. Our Patrician families had the same stern inflexibility, the same determination never to 'despair of the Republic.' Philip II of Spain and Napoleon broke themselves on them, and when Kaiser William plunged the world into the hell of the War the sons of the 'ruling families,' with reckless bravery and unstinted sacrifice, faced the horrors side by side with the men from the mines, the factories, the shops and the fields. My temper is tried when I hear certain self-styled leaders of the 'Proletariat' talk as if all political virtue and all unselfish devotion to 'the people' and 'the workers' were on their side.

France never had 'ruling families.' Its 'statesmen' were the favourites of dissolute kings, or the favourites of kings' mistresses. The noblesse, brave to a fault, were lackeys at Versailles, while the peasants on their estates were crushed, starved and brutalized by feudal exactions and callous indifference. Russia had no 'ruling families.' Its Boyards were the tools and toys of often lunatic Tsars or Messalina Empresses. In Prussia and the other German States the nobility began as brigands, sold their peoples' lives to anybody who would hire their soldiers and cringed at the spurred boots of the War Lords. Let us be just to our 'ruling families.' It is a tribute to Lord Salisbury to remember that his sons are the present Marquis, who has made one of the noblest and most cogent pleas for a brotherly reorganization of industry, Lord Cecil of Chelwood, who has won himself an everlasting name as the foremost apostle of the League of Nations, Lord Hugh Cecil, who at one time impressed his religious seriousness on the House of Commons, and Lord William Gascoyne Cecil, one of the most truly fatherly 'Fathers in God' of the Episcopate.

It has never been revealed what Lord Salisbury privately thought of Disraeli, with whom he went to the 'Peace with Honour' Congress at Berlin. He remarked afterwards that in saving the Turks 'we put our money on the wrong horse.' Did he sometimes say to himself, 'How the deuce did he come into our galley?' We Liberals could not help having a sneaking fondness for Lord Salisbury, although he did rouse our protests when, while we were talking about brightening village life with Institutes, Clubs and the like, and urging land reforms

that would keep the people on the soil, he cynically asked, 'Would not circuses be better?'

Campbell-Bannerman I heard several times. I admired his firm convictions, his personal disinterestedness, the easy flow of his pleasant oratory, with its literary allusions and happy use of Scripture phrases. He came to the front when his party was 'down and out,' and pulled it together by his skill in pouring oil on troubled waters. The last time I heard him was at the Queen's Hall meeting when the Women Suffragists made their declaration of war to the knife. It was the interim between the resignation of the Balfour Government and the 1906 Election. After the Election, when his Government was confirmed in office, with an unwieldy majority, 'C.-B.' marked the entry into party leadership of a new 'ruling class'—the successful business men. Joseph Chamberlain, of course, was a retired business man, but when he went into Parliament the time for the equality of the Bourgeoisie with the Old Nobility was not yet come, and it may well have been that the smarting sense of the class leadership had much to do with Chamberlain's hostility to 'the Venetian Oligarchy.' Bonar Law, curiously enough through his party's unwillingness to accept Austen Chamberlain, was elected as the first Conservative business man leader of the Conservative Party. I chanced to be in a train a few days after Bonar Law's election as leader, with two Conservative Party agents. One showed to the other a paper with a portrait of Bonar Law. He said, with disgust, 'Look at that face! Do you think our party will follow a man with a face like that?' I gathered that the face was not sufficiently modelled on Norman lines to command the

respect of the Dukes and the Earls, but despite the fact Bonar Law rode firmly in the saddle, and when his illness compelled his resignation it was another business man, Stanley Baldwin, who was chosen Conservative leader. After all, the government of the country and Empire demands supreme business ability, and if a successful business man can adapt his ability to the management of affairs of the State, so much the better for the State. It does not follow, however, that a man supreme in his own line of business will make a supreme statesman. Bismarck once sarcastically remarked, 'I don't know how it is, but you may select the twelve men in the country who have been the greatest successes in their businesses, and it will be a Cabinet of fools.' I have known great business men on religious committees, and many of them were simply infantile when it came to dealing with problems outside their special lines.

There was in the late 'nineties a sensational by-election in Carnarvon Boroughs, at which a young Welsh solicitor snatched a seat for Liberalism in what had been held to be the safest of Tory strongholds. A few weeks later I heard the young victor make his first public speech in London at the annual meeting of the Liberation Society. The Evangelical party in the Church of England was promoting a Bill to curb the ramping Ritualists by 'strengthening the hands of the Bishops.' 'It is not the hands of the Bishops that need strengthening,' declared the Member for Carnarvon, 'but their hearts.' That was my first taste of Lloyd George. He soon became the rising hope of the Liberal Party by his continual gadfly attacks on Joseph Chamberlain in the House. He flew at high

game, and often used an audacity that rivalled that of Chamberlain himself in his Radical days. Lloyd George's career has become a prime part of the history of his time. He has the defect of his quality—his impressionable Celtic temperament—but he has done great and unforgettable things, and in the darkest period of the War he sustained not only the courage of his country, but the courage of all the Allies. When I was in Paris in Armistice week a distinguished Frenchman said, 'But for Lloyd George, after our disastrous set-back in the spring, our courage would have failed us. We lost our *morale*. There was mutiny in the army. We despaired of victory. We were prepared to make peace at any price. It was Lloyd George who restored our *morale*, revived our hope of victory and nerved us for a fresh and final effort.' Frenchmen seemed to have forgotten all that when they denounced Lloyd George as their most dangerous enemy because he warned them of the danger of pursuing a deliberately provocative policy that endangered alike 'security' and reparations.

On the platform Lloyd George's chameleon-like genius for taking the colour of his audience is a danger. No platform 'spell-binder' is so able to be all things to all men. The danger is that, to a particular type of audience, the orator may be so bent on making the greatest immediate impression that he may forget the larger world of all sorts and conditions of men outside and convey the impression that he has committed himself much further than he really intended.

I have compared Lloyd George to a pleader addressing a jury, while Lord Oxford and Asquith's style was that

of Counsel putting a case to a Court of Appeal. The Liberal Party was fortunate in having them both. After preaching at Milton Church, Huddersfield, I walked away with Mr. Willans, maternal uncle of Asquith, and the town's leader in educational advancement and social betterment. He told me about Asquith's bringing up. The father was an amiable dreamy idealist, not at all the man to make a success of his business, which declined and fell. The mother was a highly intelligent and strong-minded woman, with all the practical qualities of the Yorkshire bred-and-born. It was the mother from whom Asquith inherited his indomitable determination, and the keen and sane intelligence that led him to the top of the legal profession and to the leadership of the party. Mr. Willans associated himself with the mother in giving the youth every opportunity of developing his natural capacity. It was their partnership in the lad that sent him to the City of London School, whence he won his way to Oxford. The influence of the Congregational Church was potent in laying the rock foundation of the convictions to which as a statesman Asquith was inflexibly loyal. I heard him on many occasions, and was amused at his fondness for certain words and phrases. 'Indisputable,' with the accent on the 'dis,' never failed to appear three or four times in a speech. When Asquith and Lloyd George, after their patched-up reunion, appeared together at a Brotherhood Commemoration of Dr. John Clifford, I was introduced to Asquith. I told him I had been writing up Liberalism for forty years, 'And go on writing it up,' he said. Alas, were I still in regular journalism, I should be perplexed to discover

‘What is Liberalism? Who are the leaders? Whom do they lead, and to what goal?’

Though not a Labour man, I was privileged to be on friendly terms with Keir Hardie. With him I went on a Brotherhood campaign in Belgium and France. He was stung into ferocious opposition to capitalism by the conscienceless and heartless treatment of himself as a boy by a wealthy Glasgow employer who dismissed him and deprived him of a week’s wages because after sitting up all night with a sick mother, when the father was unemployed and the family were starving, he was a few minutes late in the morning at his work. Privately, he was a gentle and modest soul, a man of deep religious convictions. On the platform his weakness was to be carried away by the demonstrativeness of the coarser element, who clamoured ‘Give it ’em ’ot!’ He would say, in the heat of the moment, ungenerous, unjustified, uncharitable things about classes other than ‘Labour.’ One of his colleagues told me that responsible Labour Party leaders in the House of Commons often deplored his platform violence and extravagance and had threatened to repudiate it.

On a boat trip from Charleroi a woman with a baby sat looking at Keir Hardie. She said at last, ‘You are Mr. Keir Hardie. We have got your portrait in our house.’ He had a long chat with her. Her husband had recently begun to work at the Cockerills’ great engineering works. Keir Hardie plied her with questions about the wages, the hours of labour, her shopping, how far the money went, and on her leaving the boat sent his love to her husband. She was in the seventh heaven of delight. Seeing

two black-robed monks on the river bank, he said to me, 'The twa corbies! How I hate 'em!'

It was in connection with that 'Crusade' that Keir Hardie spoke with Mr. William Ward and myself at a Brotherhood Demonstration in the *Maison du Peuple*, the headquarters of the Socialist Party in French Flanders. Until then no religious meeting had been held in the *Maison*. There had been fierce denunciation of 'Clericalism' as 'The Enemy,' and the denunciation extended to all religions. The leaders said, however, 'If you will bring Keir Hardie you shall have your meeting.' No more courageous speech than that of Keir Hardie have I ever heard. He talked with the passion of an Isaiah or a Jeremiah. He said, 'It was reading the Gospels, and studying the story of the Person of Jesus Christ, and His spirit and teaching, that brought me into the Labour Movement. I tell you brothers of the Continental countries that without the spirit and the teaching of Jesus Christ you will fail to realize your ideal of the reconstruction of society on a juster and more human basis.' He completely swept the two thousand Socialists off their feet. They encored our hymns, and in the Place outside an 'overflow' of a thousand, when the speakers addressed them, pressed to shake hands, and shouted, 'That's it! That's it!' On another occasion at Brussels, when M. Vandervelde was on the platform at the *Maison du Peuple* with us, the Beatitudes were read as the Lesson. The next day, in a page report of the meeting in the Socialist daily paper, the Beatitudes were printed as news, and news they were to ninety in a hundred of the 'Brave Belgians.'

Joseph Arch, the Moses of the farm-labourers, I knew



from my boyhood. He and my father-in-law were fellow lay preachers on the Primitive Methodist Plan and intimate friends, as were my wife and Arch's daughter. I often visited him in his later years. He was soured by the ingratitude of the labourers. He had been paid £3 a week as Secretary of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union which he founded. Younger men wanted his job. It was spread about that he was living in luxury at the labourers' expense, at a time when as Member of Parliament for North-East Norfolk—before Members got their £400 a year—he had to keep himself during sessions in London, and to maintain an invalid wife in his freehold cottage in Barford. One Saturday morning, he told me, he received a letter enclosing a cheque for a fortnight's salary, with a curt letter informing him that a meeting of the Executive had been called without his knowledge, that the Executive had passed a resolution to dissolve the Union and that the cheque was the last he would receive. Pacing, with his stick, the brick floor of his cottage, he told me how he had fought squires and farmers and parsons in the interest of the labourers who were treated as serfs. They would have got him out of the village if they could, but he had inherited the freehold cottage from his thrifty labourer father. 'I have been offered six times its value to sell it,' he said, 'but my cottage is my castle. I was born a free man, a free soul, I will not sell my soul. Free was I born and free will I die.' He distrusted tendencies of the new Labour Movement, and had no faith in or sympathy with Socialism. His little garden was his joy. One Good Friday he showed me proudly his trumpet daffodils and was confident I would

find no finer anywhere. His blood boiled at the housing conditions of the village. 'Have you been in old Ben . . . 's cottage?' he asked me. I had. 'It would be a disgrace to kennel dogs in it,' he declared, 'and there isn't a landowner who will sell a plot to build a new cottage in the village, or to put an old one into decent living condition.' That was not peculiar to Barford. I was told in a village a few miles away that young men wanting to be married sought work in the towns because they could not get cottages, and no landowner would build or sell land. Half-a-dozen engaged couples were waiting, and the young men were all seeking jobs elsewhere. The housing problem was acute long before the War, and it was not due to the shortage of labour or the selfishness of the operatives' unions. The housing question in the villages told seriously on village morals, and did much to create that shortage of efficient labour on the land that has made farming such a precarious speculation.

Will Crooks I knew not only from the Press table, but as a friend and a fellow Brotherhood speaker. A volume of Crooks's stories, as he told them, would have made the liveliest reading. I remember a week-end when we were fellow guests of Sir Richard Winfrey at Peterborough. We had spoken at an open-air Brotherhood meeting, with the Dean in the chair. At tea afterwards Crooks dissipated our Sabbath gravity. Here are three samples which may be fresh to post-War readers.

'When I was chairman of West Ham Board of Guardians I thought it would be a nice thing to give the most deserving old couples a dining-room to themselves, and let them serve themselves at meals, as a family

party. One day I went in at dinner-time expecting to find them very happy, but I was surprised to notice a certain air of restraint. Afterwards I questioned one man.

“Did you see that old man at the head of the table?” the man asked.

“Yes. What about him?”

“Did you see his wife?”

“Yes. What about her?”

“And did you see the old chap and his wife at his end of the table, on his right?”

“Yes.”

“And the old chap and his wife at the other end, on his left?”

“Yes. What about them?”

“Well, they are his pals, and *he carves*.”

‘We had to arrange for an impartial carver,’ said Will Crooks.

On Lord Mayor’s Day it has been the custom for many years for the incoming Lord Mayor to pay for a supper to poor East Enders at Mr. Charrington’s Mission Hall. Crooks described such a banquet. There were meat pies, sandwiches, cakes, pastries galore with coffee and ‘minerals’ to wash them down. Two factory girls, sitting together, did the fullest justice to the fare. One leaned back and heaved a deep sigh.

‘What’s the matter, Lizzie?’ asked her friend. ‘Do you feel ill?’

‘No, I’m not ill, but’—with another deep sigh—‘I wish now I hadn’t had my stays mended.’

One Crooks story has passed into the currency of anecdote.

A man entered a smoking compartment. The only occupant was a severe looking elderly lady. He pulled out his pipe, charged and lit it.

'Pardon me,' said the lady, 'but I object to smoking.' The man looked at the 'Smoking' on the window and went on puffing. In a minute or two the lady said, 'I told you I objected to smoking.'

He still smoked.

A third time she addressed him:

'I have told you twice that I object to smoking. You are no gentleman. If you were my husband I would put poison in your coffee.'

The smoker took no notice. Arriving at his station he got out, closed the door, politely raised his hat, and said:

'Madam, if I *were* your husband I should *drink* that coffee.'

Woolwich and all Farther East London mourned Crooks as a beloved brother when he died. The atmosphere of the House of Commons was the sweeter for his genial and humorous presence. He was a 'great human' and could see a man and a brother in a duke as well as in a docker.

In the early 'nineties I interviewed the Russian political refugee Felix Volkhovsky, and became his friend until his death just before the War. He had been Town Clerk of Odessa, a story-writer and a poet. He was a gentle soul, member of a secret society—it had to be secret—that worked for the establishment of a constitutional Government. A reference to him as a sympathizer in a letter opened in the post led to his arrest. Without trial he was kept in solitary confinement for eighteen months in the

Fortress of Peter and Paul at St. Petersburg. The warders were forbidden to speak to him. The awful silence nearly drove him mad. He started at the sound of his own voice. He was sent to a penal settlement in Siberia, and his wife was allowed to join him. They were continually spied on and harried. Even the priests played the foul rôle of spies. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, their hut would be broken into and ransacked in search of some suspected compromising letter or document. Madame Volkhovsky lost her reason, and took her life. The American traveller Cannan arranged for Volkhovsky's escape. He found his way to Vladivostock, was concealed on an American ship and got to New York. He came to England, and I met him shortly after his arrival. He succeeded, as head of the scattered constitutional refugees in Europe and America, Stepniak, the relentless apostle of force against force. Stepniak was killed by a train at a level crossing in London.

Volkhovsky said to me, 'I do not believe in meeting force by force, if it can be avoided. I put my trust in the dynamite of ideas.' He founded the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, which had many British members, and he edited its monthly, *Free Russia*. His main work was the flooding of Russia with literature by the 'underground Press.' Thereby he got at the students and the artisans, and sowed the seed that was to bear fruit in the Duma. Several times I met at his house fellow refugees. One was Tchaikovsky, who did the blocks of 'F. C. G.'s' cartoons in *The Westminster Gazette*. He showed me some of the sketches. At a reunion in Clifford's Inn Volkhovsky introduced me to Prince Kropotkin. Volkhovsky intro-

duced me also to Russian tea—compressed tea conveyed by land across Siberia, the choicest young leaves, priced at 10s. a pound. It was infused in the samovar and served with a lemon slice, without sugar or milk. Truth to tell, I never took to Russian tea. I met Volkhovsky in broken health at Balham a few months before his death.

‘I hope to live,’ he said, ‘to go back a free man to a free Russia.’

He died, and perhaps that was best. Kropotkin went back, after an exile of something like forty years and died of starvation at Moscow under Soviet ‘Freedom.’ But it may well prove that the martyrdom of such men will have been the seed of a Russia such as they dreamed, a Russia as free from the Terrorism of the Soviet Dictatorship as from that of Tsardom.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PEAKS OF THE FREE CHURCH PULPIT

*Joseph Parker—C. H. Spurgeon—John Clifford—  
F. B. Meyer—J. Morgan Gibbon—Alfred Rowland—  
J. Guinness Rogers—Charles Silvester Horne—A Joseph  
Parker Episode—General William Booth*

JOSEPH PARKER was at the zenith of his glory in 1886. I heard him scores of times at the Thursday noon service, and sometimes on Sundays. He was a puzzle. How much of his pulpit power was 'prophetic' and how much was consummate acting? He did and said and wrote things that were childish beyond belief, and his egotism verged on insanity. Where money was concerned, however, there was method in his madness. He insisted on taking the collection uncounted, and returning—without any statement of amounts given to the deacons, the 'church' was a mere figure of speech—what he thought fit for the expenses of upkeep of the building and the services. He accepted the 'call' in a letter arrogantly demanding unquestioned absolute control, and his demand was conceded. There was poetic and histrionic imagination in his preaching, set off by the dramatic shakings of his shaggy head and the voice that would have made the fortune of an operatic baritone. The voice expressed every tone and shade of the gamut of emotion. In his later years he lost by exaggeration. He would begin a

sentence, for instance, with a bellow as of a bull of Bashan, and end it in a whisper that was inaudible. There were flashing sentences that opened long vistas to the imagination. Ministers by the score attended the Thursday noonday services, and confessed that such a sentence often gave them a sermon for the next Sunday. When he began to break up I heard him say one Thursday, referring to his ministry at the City Temple, that he would rather wish the place to be burned down than have as a successor a man who was not faithful to the Gospel he had preached. Some of his idolators thought the time had come for the conflagration when Rev. R. J. Campbell began to preach his New Theology—as, for example, the secondhand bookseller who, early one morning, white-washed 'Ichabod' over the Temple front. The deacon of a country church told me he wanted to get a promise from Parker to preach a weekday afternoon anniversary sermon. He went to the Thursday service and asked the church secretary how he could get hold of Dr. Parker, explaining that he would have to rush off a few minutes after one o'clock to catch his train at King's Cross. The secretary advised him to slip into the vestry as the service was finishing, and get at Parker descending from the pulpit. He did so. There was a curtain at the steps from the vestry. The provincial deacon had been anticipated by Mrs. Parker. He heard her, on the pulpit steps, saying, 'Joe, you made a bigger fool of yourself than ever this morning.' His second wife had a wholesome restraining influence on her husband. When she died he said to the congregation, 'I lost my faith in God. I was in hell for a week.' The older I have got the more tolerant have I



become to human weaknesses, looking into myself as an apology for others' shortcomings. I have ceased to expect flawless saints, even in the pulpit, though I have known some preachers who were as near to sainthood as imperfect humanity could be. Parker was a full, hot-blooded man, emotional and highly strung, a man of quick-changing moods. One thought if he had not been a Christian and a preacher, if he had early taken a wrong turning, what might he have done? After all, 'God moves in a mysterious way,' and often chooses His most effective agents in the unlikeliest quarters, and fashions the most unpromising material for the purposes designed. I have known many blameless and earnest preachers who were apparently pulpit failures, perhaps because they were too good to sense the weaknesses of common humanity.

Among Parker's amusing weaknesses was his conviction that he was the man to checkmate Darwin, Huxley and Tyndall. He devoted his Good Friday morning sermons for several years to 'settling their hash.' As nothing was more foreign to him than the scientific spirit and logical reasoning, the trouncings he gave them were harmless enough. He was fond of writing letters to *The Times*. The question of reconstructing central London was up. In a column letter he outlined a scheme by which a series of avenues would converge to the neighbourhood of the City Temple, as the avenues of Paris converge to the Arc de Triomphe. At a luncheon in connection with the International Congregational Council the Australians invited him to visit Australia. In his dramatic way he said, 'There are two insuperable

reasons that prevent me from going to Australia. One is that Australia is 12,000 miles from England. The other is that England is 12,000 miles from Australia.'

Reference has been made to Spurgeon in the chapter on 'The Story of *The Christian World*.' Spurgeon I always liked as a man who was 'all out' for 'souls,' who was thoroughly disinterested and made his preaching power serve not only great evangelistic but great humanitarian ends. Spurgeon's College, which has sent hundreds of men into the ministry, and the splendidly managed Stockwell Orphanage, keep his memory fresh and fragrant, and ensure that his work continues. There was never a preacher who so familiarly button-holed his congregation and seemed so much at home with the God whom he preached. His simple prayers were models of what prayer should be. He, like Parker, was a full-blooded man. His thick-set body and full face by no means suggested the ascetic. He saw no reason why the thoroughgoing Christian should not get his share of the innocent joys of life. Once when an American divine was denouncing the habit of smoking—American churches include smoking among the worst vices of the worldly—Spurgeon said, 'I can smoke a good cigar to the glory of God.' Once, at a Bible Society anniversary at Exeter Hall, I sat at the Press table immediately beneath Spurgeon, and studied him while he was speaking. I noticed his hands, with the very short and thick fingers, and thought, as in the case of Parker, 'If this man had not

been a Christian, and had elected to be a sinner, what a sinner he would have made!

It was a tragedy in his closing years, more and more shut in by ill-health with narrow-minded 'fundamentalists,' that he started the Down Grade campaign against such men as Dr. Clifford. Brought up in the strictest school of Baptist Calvinism, although his heart was in continual conflict with his formal theology, I question if he ever took the trouble to study the results of Higher Criticism, or the new light which scholarly research had thrown on the evolution alike of the Old Testament revelation and the Christian faith. Such men, as they grow older, instinctively fear to uncover the foundations of a theological system that has served them well. They are like the Roman Catholics who set up the Inquisition and burnt heretics quite as much because they feared the heretics might be right as because they were convinced they were wrong. The Down Grade controversy split the denomination, and wrought endless mischief, but even the 'Modernists,' though compelled to defend themselves, loved Spurgeon too much ever to attack him. I saw the arrival of his body, with the coffin crowned with palm branches, from Mentone, and I never think without a tender thrill of the Stockwell Orphans singing the hymn 'The Homeland,' that cheered his dying hours, at the funeral service.

For nearly forty years I counted Dr. John Clifford among my most valued friends. *There* was a man who stood four-square to every wind that blew. As a factory

lad at ten years of age, he had that insatiable early and mid-Victorian thirst for knowledge that was to be won at any cost. I heard him tell how, after a ten or twelve hours' day at the factory, he would study in a garret till his mother called up the stairs, 'John, it is time you went to bed!' As with many who wrestled for education and were self-taught, he retained an almost Chinese reverence for the printed word. At eighty his pocket would be stuffed with quotations. I asked him once why he backed his opinions with so many quotations from authors most of whom were much lesser men than himself. When John Morley's *Life of Gladstone* appeared I did a seven columns' review for *The Literary World*. The proofs were sent to me to a provincial town where the Baptist Union was holding its autumnal Assembly. Dr. Clifford came in and sat beside me near a door beside the pulpit. I showed him the proofs. He grabbed them greedily. I think he lost much of that Session. He was engaged in copying bits from the quotations. In the evening the bits all appeared at a public meeting in an address on Gladstone, prepared during the day.

Mr. Lloyd George, at a Brotherhood meeting presided over by Dr. Clifford, said, 'I would as soon ring a coin on Dr. Clifford's conscience as on that of any man in England.' I told Dr. Clifford once that no man could live a week in Fleet Street with a conscience such as his. It was the custom of the Baptists to have seven-in-the-morning services during their autumn Assembly week. Dr. Clifford was to be one of the preachers at Leicester. We were in the same hotel. I apologized overnight for morning lethargy that would prevent me from hearing

the sermon, and asked him to dictate a summary of it to me after breakfast. He did so. I asked, 'What was about the size of the congregation?' He said, 'I have never preached there before, but judging by the apparent size of the place I should say about 350.' It was Wednesday, when I had to wire all my stuff. At the close of the afternoon session the Doctor came to me in deep distress. He said, 'I have been enquiring about the seating accommodation of the chapel, and I find it is not so large as I supposed. There could not have been more than 300 there.' 'I fear it is too late now,' I said, 'to make the correction. The paper has probably gone to press. And after all, what does it matter?' 'But it does matter! It will give me the keenest pain to see that false statement in *The Christian World* in the morning, knowing that I made it.' I soothed him by promising to wire the correction at once, and happily it was just in time.

Early in his ministry he fixed a rate of stipend, very moderate, above which he felt he could not conscientiously go. His deacons, when he became the acknowledged chieftain of the Free Churches, while maintaining a magnificently successful ministry, tried again and again to persuade him to take more money. He always circumvented them. They would cunningly present him with a big cheque to celebrate his golden wedding, his ministerial jubilee, or some other occasion. He always countered their cunning by giving the money to some object which he had at heart. That disinterestedness gave point and force to his appeals for self-sacrificial giving and service. Not a few great pulpit stars have lost power because they have looked on their drawing power

overmuch from the professional standpoint. They brought much money into the church, and why should they not profit by it? Of course there is a professional side to the ministry, and a very good case can be made out for paying the minister what he is professionally worth, but after all it is claimed that a man becomes a minister and a preacher because he has been unable to resist the pull of a sacred vocation, and the vocation is to preach a Gospel of unselfish service and unstinted sacrifice. When a man urges such service and sacrifice on the laity, and allows himself to take all that he is worth as a pulpit 'star,' the laity largely discount his Gospel. It is disagreeably reminiscent of the hero of the song who

Fled full soon on the first of June  
And bade the rest keep fighting.

One Sunday afternoon I was addressing the Brotherhood at Westbourne Park. When I sat down the chairman called 'Dr. Clifford.' Unknown to myself he had been lying on the sofa in the vestry listening to me. He said some kind words and took me down into the Institute to have tea. A servant girl came to him with a volume of sermons by some forgotten eighteenth-century nonentity. 'My brother saw this book on a bookstall,' she said, 'and as it looked very old, he thought you would like it.' 'Thank your brother for me,' said the Doctor, 'and tell him I will read it with pleasure.' I am sure that he did.

At the 1910 Election Dr. Clifford spoke in the Balham Assembly Hall. I was on the platform. It was his fourth speech that day. In his animation he unconsciously

approached the edge of the platform. A foot slipped over, he lost his balance and looked as if he would fall headlong. He struggled violently to right himself, and happily came foot foremost on to the reporters' table. He mounted again to the platform, remarked gaily, 'Not bad that for a man past seventy, was it?' and continued his speech.

At a National Free Church Council demonstration at Brighton he spoke with tremendous power for more than an hour. Next week I met him at the famous Free Church 'We will not submit' deputation to Mr. Balfour, at the beginning of the fight on the Education Bill. 'You stirred us all up in the Dome last week,' I said. 'Did I?' he said. 'I will tell you why. I had been speaking three or four times a day for a fortnight. I felt myself falling asleep on the platform. When the Chairman called on me I shouted as loud as I could to wake myself up, and it was that that did the trick.'

During the War I presided at a series of lectures he gave to Brotherhood speakers in the Westminster Central Hall. One night he said, 'The fear of my life is that I may become an old fogey. Do you know what an old fogey is? He is a man who closes down his mind. There are old fogies at twenty-five.'

When he was eighty-two he called to see me at the office. There were forty steps to climb to my room. 'Why on earth,' I asked, 'didn't you send word you were downstairs, and I would have come down to you?' He shook his fist, and said, 'if you make an insinuation like that again I will knock you down.' The last time I met him, a few weeks before his sudden death at a Baptist

Union Committee, he again playfully threatened me. His sight was failing and some months before, when Miss Clifford brought him to a meeting, I said, 'You ought to have a walking-stick.' He spurned the 'insinuation.' Sitting by his side at a National Free Church Council Committee, he showed me a walking-stick and said he was tempted to lay it about me. 'It's all your fault,' he said. 'You said in my daughter's presence I ought to have a stick, and she took advantage of it. What did I want with a stick? But she gave me no peace till I got one.'

Like Mr. Isaac Foot, in the House of Commons, his hero of heroes was Cromwell. He rarely failed to 'adorn his tale' with a reference to Cromwell. 'Cromwell still lives,' he would declare. Shortly after the outbreak of the War I was speaking at the Westbourne Park Brotherhood. In the vestry Dr. Clifford startled me by an unexpected revelation of the 'Iron-side' spirit. With fierce indignation he spoke to me of the German violation of Belgian neutrality, and said, 'My great regret is that I am too old to go and fight myself.'

Till 1906 I kept myself crab-like in my library shell. I had no ambition to be a public speaker or preacher. It was Dr. F. B. Meyer who cracked the shell and forced me to take to platform and pulpit. *The Christian World* contributed £250 to the National Free Church Council's campaign in the 1906 Election against the Balfour Bill to put denominational schools on the rates. There was the condition that I should accompany Dr. Meyer and Rev. Thomas Yates on their motor-car tour from



London to the West and through Devon and Cornwall round to the South Coast and back to London. I was to be simply the 'war correspondent.' It happened that Dr. Meyer could not join Mr. Yates on the first day. We had several breakdowns on the way to Reading, where a large and representative company were awaiting us for the 'kick-off' at a lunch. Several telegrams were sent to Reading to explain the causes of delay, but as it happened it was four o'clock when we crept ignominiously through the town. The next meeting was at Marlborough. Mr. Yates pressed me to step into the gap. I was given twenty minutes for the opening speech. Somehow it caught on. I told some stories that put the audience into the right humour for Mr. Yates. On reaching Exeter I was put on again to an audience of three thousand. When Dr. Meyer heard of it the next day, he peremptorily commanded me to lead off at each of the following meetings. On the way to Bridgwater Mr. Yates, who had sat glum for half-an-hour, said to Mr. Meyer, who was no smoker, 'Look here, Meyer, if you were Dr. Torrey [a grimly austere evangelist of those days] I should have a smoke.' Meyer gently chided us for our weakness and said, 'Very well. If you men will promise not to smoke strong tobacco I will buy you some.' He gravely admonished us that we were not so much on an electioneering campaign as on a spiritual mission and we must keep the speaking at a high spiritual level. In my first speech in his hearing I told some stories that I feared might not strike him as exactly reaching the level. One I had found in an eighteenth-century French book. It was a story of a battle. On the side that remained in possession of the

field, parties were told off to bury the dead. A soldier went up to the sergeant in charge of his party and said, 'Look here, sergeant, what are we to do? There is a man over there who says he isn't dead and he objects to be buried.' The sergeant replied, 'Take no notice of what he says. If you listen to what they say you will get none of them buried.' My 'moral' was that the Government had convinced themselves that the Nonconformists were dead and had dug their graves, but so far from being dead they were very much alive and it might well be that Old Testament history would repeat itself and that those who had dug the pit would themselves fall into it. Meyer insisted that I should tell the story of 'the man who was dead' at every subsequent meeting—and there were about thirty of them—and at each re-telling he laughed as if he had never heard it before. The other story was from *Punch*. There was a picture of a cottage in a village. The Vicar had his hand on a boy's head. The boy had won a prize for good conduct. On the wall was a picture of a smug man with cropped head. The Vicar said, 'You are a very good boy. If you go on winning prizes for good conduct, you will be a fine man when you grow up.' The mother, with a corner of her apron to her eyes, said, 'Yes, sir, he is just like his poor dear pa. His pa always got a bit took off his sentences for good conduct.' The 'moral' here was that Mr. Balfour was no doubt a very good gentleman, but he was in bad company, and though a bit might be taken off his sentence for good conduct neither he nor his colleagues could be dismissed at the Election trial without a stain on their character. I hope I did not corrupt the pure mind of Dr. Meyer, but after

about his third meeting he began to tell a story about a canvasser in an election who, when the lady of the house answered the door and said her husband was not in, and was asked 'Is your husband a Liberal?' 'Well, he was,' she answered, 'till he fell out of the back of a cart and cracked his skull and since then he has been a Conservative.' After that Mr. Yates and myself felt that without strain we could keep our speeches at the necessary 'high spiritual level.'

We had a breakdown in the New Forest. There was a small general shop near by. Dr. Meyer went in and came out with two packets of 'Country Life' tobacco, which he presented to us. We told him we should preserve them as souvenirs of the tour, with inscriptions that they had been presented by Dr. Meyer.

I had always an affection for Dr. Meyer. His warm-blooded humanity and his entire consecration to his work of evangelization commanded unstinted admiration. He was sometimes in penitential mood in his conversations with us on the tour. One day he said that, 'It was a besetting temptation of a minister to take means to secure an end which was good in itself that fell below the standard of Christian consistency. I am conscious that in my early ministry,' he said, 'I sometimes took such means. I am sure that it always lowered my spiritual *morale* and if I had to begin over again I would not do it.' He told me once a story of an experience that revealed the simplicity of the man in an amusing light. During the period of the Armenian Massacres he got an introduction to a Pasha who was believed to have great influence with the Sultan Abdul-Hamid. Meyer thought

this was a providential opportunity to get the influence exerted in such a way as would soften the heart of Abdul. Arrived at Constantinople, he was received in the most cordial way by the Pasha, 'But,' he said, 'imagine my horror when a black servant in splendid livery entered with coffee and cigarettes on a silver tray. I knew how any refusal of hospitality in the East is regarded as an offence to the host. I had never smoked. What was I to do? I remembered my hope that the Pasha might through my appeal use influence that would save many lives and incalculable suffering. I breathed a silent prayer, accepted the cigarette which was lighted by the black attendant and, thank God, I smoked it without any painful consequences.'

In September of the same year the first National Brotherhood Council was held in London. Dr. Meyer was the President. I sat at the Press table. There was discussion in which speaker after speaker had been harping on the string of 'Christian Democracy.' I sent up my name and in a four minutes' address with some sentimental stories of married life, happy and unhappy, I argued that the first need was 'Christian Domesticity.' Dr. Meyer caught on to this and the delegates caught on to it with such unanimity that I was elected without being asked to the National Executive and the London Executive, and so was dragged into a movement of which willy-nilly I was forced later into the London and the National Presidencies and into the joint pioneership with William Ward of the International Brotherhood 'Crusades.' Many a time, looking at the thousands of books in my library I had promised myself to read, I have

regretted that Dr. Meyer and others discovered what they considered an unsuspected gift for platform work, but I have never been able to resist using whatever gifts I might have had in my mental make-up for varied Christian service. After all, the journalism and the books gave me qualifications which had some effect on the quality of the spoken word. That 'Christian Domesticity' intervention originated a legend that I had an address on 'Kiss the Missus,' which scores of secretaries wrote imploring me to deliver at their Brotherhoods. A Hull daily, after I had spoken in that city, devoted the whole of the next morning's poster to 'Apostle of Kiss the Missus in Hull.'

Rev. J. G. Stevenson told me how he met Meyer in Italy. They went together to Naples. Wishing to get the most out of a long morning they engaged a carriage with a typical Neapolitan 'Jarvey.' On returning to the hotel Meyer was deputed to pay the fare. He showered lire into the man's palm. The man began to pour out passionately a Vesuvius eruption of burning words, with violent gesticulations. With memory of stories of the readiness with which enraged Italians whip out the stiletto Meyer kept on adding lira to lira, but the eruption was ever more Vesuvianic. At last he asked Stevenson to summon the hotel manager to ascertain what was the grievance. After a brief voluble exchange the manager returned with uproarious laughter. 'Why,' he said, 'you gave him twice as much as he expected at the first payment, and he was only expressing his thanks to the generous Inglese and invoking the blessings of Holy Mary and the Saints on your head.'

When the Brotherhood Movement held in the Albert Hall a Thanksgiving Service after the Armistice Dr. John Henry Jowett entered unobtrusively and sat in a back seat of the platform. An usher of the Hall came to us and said, 'You ought to bring Dr. Jowett to the front. You cannot leave in a back seat the greatest living preacher.' That was a fine testimony to the place won by Dr. Jowett in public estimation. I used many of his sermons in *The Christian World Pulpit*, sometimes asked for and sometimes sent when the preacher thought they should have the wider publicity. His growth to his pre-eminence was slow. When I heard him preach and speak after he had left Newcastle I was somewhat disappointed. I thought, though his matter was always good and his manner winsome, that he was finicking. The old school-teacher peeped out in the fondness for searching the *New Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, the parts of which I reviewed for thirty-five years. Jowett would take a text containing a word that he played with as a cat might play with a mouse. He read into the text all the wealth of varied signification that he had found in the development of the signification of the word. I smiled to myself as I heard him, or read a sermon, to think how astonished the author would have been to discover how much Jowett had found in the word, knowing from some acquaintance with Hebrew and Greek how concrete and realistic was the 'Sacred Authors' usage of words. 'Carving cherry stones,' I said to myself. It was Carrs Lane that emancipated Jowett from his etymological proclivity. The successor of Dale could not but broaden out in face of the Birmingham

audience which looked to Carrs Lane for guidance in facing the stern tasks of the Christian life in the new age. Jowett never lowered the flag of his whole-hearted consecration to the preaching of the Gospel that is 'the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe.' He knew that the fountain of issues of good and evil is the heart, and that the heart must be purified and sanctified if the Christian man is to become a 'living Epistle seen and read of all men.' At the end of the first year of the Digbeth Institute Dr. Jowett invited me to write the annual report. I spent four days in Birmingham seeing what was done and had several heart-to-heart talks with Jowett. He opened his heart to me about the lengthening chain his scrupulous conscience in sermon preparation had become to him. Being Jowett, nothing but his best satisfied him. He said that often before he got the inevitable wording of a phrase he wrote the phrase half-a-dozen times. He kept close to his manuscript, though he found freedom enough to deliver it with the appearance of spontaneity. He took me to the Institute on a Wednesday night when Carrs Lane ladies gathered girls round them for a chat while the girls did their sewing or knitting. As we were about to leave, the presiding lady came up and said, 'Dr. Jowett, will you please say a few words to the girls? They will be so disappointed if they do not hear you.' He turned to me and said in a whisper, 'Jeffs, I can't do it. It is a horror to me to be called on unexpectedly to speak impromptu. Will you say something?' I told a little story found in a book of Cornish folklore tales of a Pixie who had lost his laugh and went miserably about the country till he had found it, and

tacked on the moral that religion is designed to restore the laugh of people who have lost it. Jowett followed with a few sentences voicing the appreciation of the girls. I went with him on one occasion to a celebration of the Primitive Methodist Centenary in the Town Hall. He made a seven minutes' speech that sounded absolutely spontaneous. I took a verbatim note for *The Christian World* and as we left I asked his permission to transcribe and use it. 'Don't trouble to transcribe it,' he said. 'Here it is,' and he drew a typed manuscript from his pocket.

That address, comparing Primitive Methodism to a countryside with the smell of the good brown earth and the scent of the hay and the flowers of the hedgerows, was a perfect prose poem. He told me again what torture it was to have to find fitting words for impromptu speaking. I went with him to the Sunday School Teachers' Preparation Class, with about a couple of hundred teachers from a number of schools, in Carrs Lane Lecture Hall. He revelled in this work, of which very little was known. The Lesson for the next Sunday was on Paul before the Sanhedrim. With a piece of chalk Jowett sketched the sitting of the Sanhedrim, and told picturesquely the method of procedure. Every now and again he would break off to say, 'Now if yours is a class for children under twelve' or 'If you have an adolescent class I should treat it in this way.'

Lunching with him the next day, he again recurred to his difficulty in impromptu speaking and his enchainment to the manuscript. I urged him to try the experiment of waiting till he was well warmed up in the delivery of the sermon and then to break loose for a minute or two,



from the manuscript and see what happened. A year later he reminded me of my advice and said he had been following it and to his immense delight he found that he was winning increasing freedom. Not only thoughts but phrasing and illustrations came to him that he believed were better than those worked out in his study.

On his return from America Sir Murray Hyslop and I took to a Westminster Chapel morning service a delegation of leaders of the Protestant Churches of France, with whom we were associated in the raising of a fund to resettle the ruined and homeless French Protestant families after the War. The delegation were given seats of honour on the rostrum. Jowett was in his most virile form in preaching a sermon of overwhelming power on Paul, the man and his message and work. The members of the delegation told me on the Monday that they had never dreamt of such mighty preaching. They would carry from London two ineffaceable impressions—the sermon of Jowett and the evening service at Westminster Central Hall at which, though the homely sermon of Dr. Dinsdale T. Young gave them intense pleasure, what astonished and moved them more was the rattling of the three thousand tip-up seats when the congregation rose and resumed their seats.

One of the sermons of Jowett in *The Christian World Pulpit* that pleased me most was on 'Modern Enochs,' men Jowett had actually known who were obscure enough but were the salt and savour of their countryside, 'walking with God' and diffusing the odour of sanctity of their Christian character into the atmosphere and purifying the moral and spiritual atmosphere of all

within the range of their influence. I cherish the manuscript which he sent to me type-written but with the title written in his dainty script.

Well for churches of to-day were it if the pastors had the secret of the staying power that enabled so many of those Victorians to keep their strong hold on full churches for half a lifetime. I was at Stamford Hill when the Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon began his more than forty years' ministry. I attended the church for two or three years, but have to confess that with all the intellectual force and brilliance his preaching too often left me cold and unsatisfied. He used too freely his mordant sarcasm and this jarred on me. He softened much in later years. He told me once that he early became conscious of the danger of frittering time and mind in dawdling, until the will to settle down to systematic reading and sermon preparation was paralysed. Sir W. Robertson Nicoll bluntly declared that nineteen out of twenty cases of ministerial failure were due to sheer inertia. 'A minister,' Morgan Gibbon said, 'can get up when he likes, spend as much time as he likes over his breakfast and his paper, saunter with his pipe for half-an-hour or more round his garden, and half the morning is gone. Then there are always retired business and professional men at a loose end. They say to themselves, "I will call and have a chat with the minister." They call, and when they leave the morning is gone, or if any of it is left the minister is entirely out of the mood for work. If the minister's morning is wasted he cannot settle

down in the afternoon. I resolved to work to office hours—breakfast at eight. I had my books in use and my writing materials taken to the church vestry where, from nine till one o'clock, I was locked up secure from morning distractions. Then, after lunch, I was fit for any visitation, committees, meetings or other calls in the afternoon.' He was in the succession of Luther and John Wesley in regarding the Epistle to the Galatians as the charter of spiritual liberty.

After Stamford Hill I lived for a year or two at Crouch End, and attended morning service at Park Lane Chapel, during the ministry of that genial and sociable 'Father in God,' Dr. Alfred Rowland. I sat in the gallery, did not make myself known, and not being then the notorious character I was doomed to become I escaped recognition. I liked his cheery and practical sermons very much. They had in them 'the sincere milk of the Word' and the warmth of the personality of the man. Shortly after I moved to South London I received a letter from Dr. Rowland telling me how he had heard of my unsuspected presence in his congregation. 'We are just about to issue our annual report,' he said. 'We added ninety-nine to our membership last year. I should be very pleased if you felt inclined even now to become a member and so make up the hundred.' I thought of myself as 'the one that was lost,' whom the good shepherd was seeking to find, but I was such a 'wandering sheep' that I did not see my way to join the fold.

At that time Dr. J. Guinness Rogers was minister of Grafton Square Church, Clapham, which he filled for forty years or more. Combative Liberal though he was, he never used his pulpit for political ends, and leaders of local Conservatism were devoted members of his church. Sometimes I went to hear him. I knew him well as the doughty champion of Free Church principles. It was joy to him to find some rash or arrogant statement of a Bishop or Dean in *The Times* or a Church paper. Often, at an afternoon meeting, I heard him having a royal half-hour with a speech that left nothing of the dignitary but a scrap-heap. He never conceded precedence to a Bishop over a Free Church minister. He wrote a good deal for *The Christian World*. Preachers find it difficult to boil themselves down to newspaper requirements. Many a six or seven columns' article of his I boiled down to a couple of columns—as I had to do with articles from Dr. Griffith John, of China, and Henri de Pressensé, French Senator and theologian, a favourite of the elder James Clarke, with his chatty articles on what was passing in politics and religion in France. Guinness Rogers was one of the cheerful saints, Puritan at heart, but by no means turning their backs on the innocent pleasures to be enjoyed in God's good world. At a certain Colonial Missionary Society Demonstration at the City Temple during Union Week, at which he was to have spoken, a telegram was received from him regretting that he found himself unable to attend. It was a Tuesday night, and imagining a sudden illness, I called at his house off Clapham Common on my way home. On the door being opened I heard shouts of laughter from several voices. I

asked 'How the Doctor was.' The maid looked surprised, and said, 'I will call him.' He came to the door in evening dress, looking anything but an invalid. 'I heard your telegram read at the City Temple,' I said. 'I hope your indisposition is not serious.' With the nearest suspicion to a wink possible to a grave divine, he said, 'If you say anything about it at all, you may say it is not alarming.' He was entertaining some of his old cronies. One of my daughters was dictatee for his Autobiography. She found him the kindest of men.

One Sunday evening in the spring of 1914 Mr. William Ward came to my house with a cabled message from Toronto. It stated that Rev. Charles Silvester Horne had died suddenly on the steamer crossing the Lake of Ontario from the American side. The news was as stunning as if it had been that of a personal bereavement. A day or two before he sailed on that last voyage I had been the guest of Mr. Horne and Mr. Arthur Henderson at dinner in the House of Commons. It was when the Irish Home Rule Bill was before the House and Ulster was threatening rebellion. There was a possibility of a sudden dissolution of Parliament. Mr. Horne was Member for Ipswich and he was uneasy lest an election should take place in his absence. Mr. Henderson and I chaffed him, but we said we would, if the need arose, go and speak for him in his constituency. In September of 1913 I had at Birmingham invested him with the chain of National Brotherhood President. Not long before his sailing I had heard him at the Queen's Hall deliver an

address in which he lauded Moses as a social reformer who was four thousand years ahead of his time. At a week-night anniversary of Allen Street Congregational Church, Kensington, I heard him while yet, as pastor-elect, he was completing his course at Mansfield College. Even then, in matter and manner, there was a dainty finish that foreshadowed the Horne of his mature years. He was still 'Mr. C. Silvester Horne' when I published four sermons preached at Allen Street on 'Self-control,' 'Courtesy,' 'Honour' and 'Cheerfulness'—sermons of an unexpected psychological insight, of an insight, a phrasing, an instinctive rightness such as musicians say were the characteristics of the compositions of the young Mozart. When, after his ordination, he began his regular ministry, he went steadily from strength to strength. I thought him to be, all round, about the most perfect preacher—the voice so modulated as justly to express every shade of emotion from playful humour to the deeper notes of serious appeal, the perfect poise, the graceful gesture. The church was soon filled by a congregation drawn by the charm of the man and the richness of his sermons in the qualities that appealed alike to heart and mind. And yet all that was in Horne was not fully revealed till he had an illness that brought him very near to the gates of the eternal. I went to hear him on the morning of the first Sunday of his return. His sermon dwelt much on John Knox and his conception of the sovereignty of an overruling God. Horne criticized the soft, easy-going view of God that had enfeebled and attenuated so much modern thought and teaching about God. He urged that the God of the almighty arm that

wields the rod of judgment must not be forgotten in the view of God solely as the One who 'feeds His sheep like a shepherd.' I detected a deeper note and a passion that were missing in the man before he had been brought face to face with the glimpse of the life beyond. There was the irresistible urge of the 'Needs must' to deliver the Gospel message to souls in mortal peril. From that time, too, he began to develop to that Horne, the 'Chevalier without fear and without reproach,' who became the tireless apostle of spiritual freedom and social justice. He found Allen Street too cramped for the man he had become, but found in Whitefields an arena that gave him fullest scope, and Whitefields was the place of departure for a ministry that became ever more national and influential. 'The zeal of the Lord' was 'eating him up.' Did he have a premonition of his earthly end in mid-career? It seemed as if he could not crowd enough into his working life. He was overmastered by a consuming passion that wore down his never strong physique. He overstrained his voice, and his nerves began to show signs of raggedness. Friends urged him to spare himself, believing that so doing he would add years to his ministry; and so friends had urged Hugh Price Hughes and Charles Albert Berry. Such men cannot slow down. With them it is, in the noblest sense, 'all for love and the world well lost,' but, as a forgotten poet put it, life is measured 'not by figures on a dial' but by 'heart beats.' The 'heart beats' of the men spurred on by the divine urging are the driving power of the world towards the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Reverting to Whitefields, I was present when Dr.

Joseph Parker laid the foundation stone of the rebuilt 'Tabernacle.' It was an afternoon when the darkness fell early. It began to fall while he was preaching. In the darkness Parker began to 'fade out.' From the back of the platform the caretaker began to creep round with a lighted lantern. This upset the preacher. With a mighty sweep of his arm towards the caretaker he shouted, 'Away!' The terrified man fled, no doubt wishing that the earth would open and swallow him up like Dathan, Korah and Abiram.

I spent the first Sunday of the West London Central Mission in the old St. James's Hall with Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, Rev. Mark Guy Pearse and their workers. The Mission marked the triumph of the 'Young Methodist' Movement. That Movement had been looked on frowningly by the Mandarins of the eminently respectable Methodism of the period. Dr. Gregory especially, who spoke with authority in the counsels of Methodism, had sought to save Methodism from such a dangerous experiment as the proposed Mission. Hugh Price Hughes, however, was not a man to be held in leash when his soul was fired. On that Sunday I detected a shade of anxiety. He had undertaken in faith a revolutionary movement that had to justify itself by great results. The idea that the West End needed salvation just as much as the East End was only faintly realized. Sin was identified largely with sordid and shabby people who indulged in the vulgar vices. There was a subconscious feeling that the respectable were not in serious soul peril,



any more than the French Duchess who said that 'God would not condemn a woman who had fifteen shields on the family escutcheon.' Hugh Price Hughes wanted to get beneath the varnish of the respectability and 'convict of sin' the people who, though horrified at the victims of the vulgar vices, were themselves guilty of the sins of selfishness and cold-blooded indifference to the sufferings of their poorer brethren. The Jew mingled with the Welshman in his physical constitution as in his mental and spiritual make-up. He was an impetuous Eager-Heart, very sure of himself, and ready to snap any leash that would hold him back from the mission he had undertaken. He believed that a Mission could be no less effective because it used a magnificent Hall and impressed into its service the charm of the best music rendered by a superb orchestra and choir. He believed immensely in the power of the Press to co-operate in a friendly way with religious work that made a real appeal to the outside public. I was at the National Free Church Council Conference at Bristol when he said that, 'If there was only one vacant seat in the Hall and there came in a Duke and a reporter and a steward came to me and asked to which he should give the seat, I should say, "Give it to the reporter: he may represent half-a-million, the Duke represents only himself." ' It was always good to hear him preach, with his whole soul poured out in pressing the urgency of response to the Gospel invitation to the all-round service of humanity. He loved to quote Horace Bushnell's saying that 'The soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul.' With all his catholicity of outlook he was Methodist to the marrow of his bones. I heard him say

once that 'In a hundred years Christendom will be divided between Methodism and the Roman Catholic Church.' He fought like a tiger against the proposal, when the Evangelical Free Church Council Constitution was under discussion, for the admission of Unitarians. If these were admitted, he declared, the Methodists would remain out. I travelled with him once to Hatfield for the opening of a new Methodist Church. The Lord Salisbury of the period—or his agent—had refused to sell any plot on the estate for such a church. Somebody who had got a bit of freehold land outside Cecil ownership sold it to the Methodists and it was a dear delight to Price Hughes to open the church as the trophy of a signal victory.

One of his colleagues told me that he asked Price Hughes how it was that the Mission's lay evangelist got so many conversions while they seemed so rare under the preaching of Price Hughes and himself. 'The explanation,' said Price Hughes, 'is that that man has been down there himself with them. He sees what he was himself in those people and he speaks to himself in them. You and I have never been down with them and we do not know how to approach them.' An illustration of his eager mind is given in the Life of him by his daughter that appeared not long after his death. He would sometimes take home to lunch a friend. He was supposed to do the carving. He would forget all about the carving, having broached some subject that led to voluble speech and gesticulation, emphasized by the brandishing of the carving-knife. Mrs. Price Hughes had to take the carving-knife from him or no progress would have been made with the meal. A short-hand writer friend of mine in similar fashion, when a

phonographic friend was at his table, kept the meal waiting while with the carving-knife he demonstrated consonantal outlines in the air.

Long as this chapter has been, it seems fitting to conclude it with a man who was a product of the Methodist pulpit.

For a score of years I had the entrée to General William Booth, the Founder of the Salvation Army. He fully appreciated the value of Press publicity. On his motor-car tour from the North through East Anglia I was one of half-a-dozen journalists in the procession of six cars. The General was getting old, and the older he got the more difficulty he found in compressing his addresses. He spoke four or five times a day, indoors or out. One of the addresses was given in the United Methodist Church at Spalding where he had begun his ministry. After we had heard the address three or four times the journalists and chauffeurs waited till he was well going and then strolled around till the cars were due to move off to the next place. It was always the man rather than the address that was impressive. He was always at 'go in the shade.'

When his eldest son, Commissioner in the United States command, refused at the end of his five years' term to return to England and give place to his appointed successor, I called at the International Headquarters. The General was in tears as he talked about what was not only an act of rebellion against the General which practically separated America from the unity of the Army, but was a

cruel blow to the heart of the father. He said, 'What could I do? I must be just. My authority depends on the belief of my officers in my justice. If I broke rules to favour my children my authority would be greatly weakened.' Not long before his death I wrote a page about the Salvation Army for *The Christian World*. I spent an afternoon with the General at his house at Hadley. He was in reminiscent mood. He said that he had been opposed to women preachers until he was persuaded to go to a service at the old Moravian Chapel, Fetter Lane, where he heard a woman preacher 'and she preached so much better than I could that I could no longer resist.' He was troubled about so many of the children of his chief officers, who had been given good education, not being disposed to enter the Army as their career. There was the collateral trouble of the Army losing an increasing number of its members who after a time found that the average officers had talked themselves out many times. And there was the fact that educated men and women who had joined the Army showed much more staying power than the average officer. 'I have been,' he said, 'working out a scheme for the creation of a Salvation Army University, in which picked young men and women could be given a three or four years' course of specialized training.' He did not live to realize the scheme.

The subject of marriages in the Salvation Army came up. The General said, 'A couple of my officers come to me to ask my consent to their marriage. I ask, "Are you quite sure it is the Lord's will?" "We have prayed over it," they reply, "and we are quite sure it is the Lord's

will." I am not always so sure myself. Love may be blind in the Salvation Army as everywhere else. Usually I tell them to pray over it for a further six months, and then come to me again. They come again and invariably say, "We have prayed over it and are surer than ever that it is the Lord's will." Then, of course, I always have to give in.'

I wanted a portrait to illustrate my article and asked him if he would sit to a Press photographer whom we would send to his house at his convenience. He was very willing. He summoned his secretary and said, 'Bring me my engagement book.' The secretary, to my mind, was fairly brisk in his movement, but the General, before he had reached the door, called impatiently, '*Do* be quick. Be quick!' When the photographer arrived the General asked to be taken seated with his dog on his knees. He said that the picture was one of the best of him ever taken. I felt that his secretaries were men of the type that learns to endure hardness. I was guest of a Mayoress of Leicester who had shortly before been for an evening hostess of the General. She said that a week before the visit a secretary arrived and asked if he might see the bedroom. After inspection he asked if the bed and the furniture might be rearranged to suit the General's requirements. Also could a telephone wire be run under the door from the General's room to the adjoining secretary's room. And would the hostess kindly arrange with the cook that the supper should be ready at a given time and that it should be simply rice pudding without sugar, and roasted apples? A quarter of an hour before the General was to return from the meeting the secretary

rushed in. 'Will the supper be ready?' he asked. 'You did not forget, I suppose, that there should be no sugar in the rice pudding?' 'Oh, I am sorry,' said the lady. 'That quite slipped from my memory.' The secretary was staggered, but being a man of resource, after a moment's thought, he said, 'I will try to distract his attention before the pudding is served. The General's mind is full of a new scheme. As soon as he sits down I will mention the scheme and get his mind going on it.' The strategy was completely successful. The secretary told the hostess that often at two or three in the morning, when the General was working out a new development, he would 'phone the secretary and dictate to him for a couple or three hours.

## CHAPTER IX

### MISSIONARIES AND LAYMEN

*Dr. Timothy Richard and the 'United States of the World'—Charles W. Abel—Industrial Training and 'Muscular Christianity'—How a Chinaman Evangelized his Wife—The Two Sir John Kirks—Livingstone's Chief of Staff—Slave Traders' Relentless Foe—Henry Dauncey—The National Free Church Council—Sir Joseph Compton Rickett: 'Herbert Spencer's Successor'—Sir William P. Hartley—'The Lord's Portion'—Cheerful Workers as a Business Asset*

It was my good fortune to come into touch, and in many cases into personal friendship, with missionaries. During my residence at Sevenoaks several, who had daughters at Walthamstow Hall School for the Daughters of Missionaries, were my guests at tea, and 'fought their battles over again.' The Baptist Rev. Borst Smith, of Sianfu, China, and his wife brought their three-year-old boy. The lively child was a very interesting illustration of the miraculous way in which languages are picked up 'without learning.' Six months before, having been brought up with Chinese domestics, he scarcely knew a word of English. On the journey home he 'picked it up' with such success that as he gambolled on the floor with a friendly cat conversation was carried on with his father and mother alternately in Chinese and English. I am told it

takes a missionary seven years to get a fair working knowledge of Chinese.

Three times, on his furloughs, I had interviews with that agile-minded Baptist missionary in China, Dr. Timothy Richard. By 'interview' I mean that he would talk for two or three hours while I listened, wondering 'how the small head could carry all he knew.' He was a prime favourite with Li Hung Chang, the 'Mussolini' of China—as much a Mussolini as the strong-willed Empress—the last ruler of the reigning Manchu Dynasty—would tolerate. Richard was a Mandarin. He specialized on education, diffusing through his Press not only Scripture portions and religious books, but translations of scientific and other literature that opened the doors of Western culture to the eager Chinese students. China, however, was much too small for his out-reach. He told me how, on his last voyage home, long before the League of Nations had been thought of, he had gone several 'ones better' than the League of Nations. With diplomats, Indian Ruling Princes, Generals, merchant princes, statesmen and 'all sorts and conditions' he had been the incessant propagandist all the way home of a scheme for the constitution of a 'United States of the World.' A dreamer? Well, such dreamers are the seed-sowers, without whom the far-off harvest would never germinate.

One of my saddest openings of the morning paper was when I read that Charles W. Abel, the L.M.S. missionary



on the island of Kwato, off the south coast of New Guinea, had been knocked down, as he stepped from the path into a country road, and terribly injured by a motor car. Just home on furlough, he had not yet realized what a multitudinous juggernaut the motor car had become. I wrote a letter to him in the hospital, but the end had come. It was one of his joys on furlough to take morning coffee with Arthur Porritt and myself at Groom's century-old Coffee House, near to *The Christian World* office. In his letters he always wished he was with us at Groom's. Over those cups he would yarn about his experiences. He was not only a great industrial trainer, but an enthusiastic believer in athletics as a means of grace. He had a team of crack Papuan cricketers. One of his red-letter days was when, on a visit to the island, a match was got up with a Government Commission, that included two of Australia's best batsmen. Mr. Abel thought his work had not been in vain when his Papuan 'demon bowler' got both the batsmen out for ducks.

When another Commission visited New Guinea sports were got up on the mainland. Mr. Abel refused to allow his trained 'boys' to enter for the events, as they would have scared off all other competitors. He took with him in his Mission boat only a casual lot of rowers, some getting on in years. These implored him to let them enter for some of the events, and he yielded. There was a boat race round the island. His scratch crew won by lengths. They won a foot race. They won a club-hurling competition. There was a tug of war against a team of giant Papuan policemen. Mr. Abel's 'boys' pulled them helplessly struggling over the line. 'The secret was,' he said,

‘that my “boys” were godly, clean-living men, every man a teetotaller.’

As a theological student, he was sent as ‘supply’ to village chapels. Entering the pulpit on his first engagement he had a fright. There was, in the front row, a man with a domed forehead like that of a Plato, or a Sir Oliver Lodge. ‘I thought,’ said Mr. Abel, ‘he must be some distinguished visiting Professor or a College Principal. I was in a mortal funk, and thought of feigning sudden illness. However, I struggled through the best I could. After the service I was introduced to the fearsome stranger as my host. He was the village cobbler, and a greater fool I never met.’

At the close of the evening service he had another shock. The church secretary slipped two half-crowns into his hand. ‘Thank you for your services, young man,’ he said. ‘No doubt you have done your best, but you might tell them at the College, the next time they send us a supply, to send us a ten-bobber.’

I hope an ex-China missionary, still very much alive, Rev. W. Nelson Bitton, of the London Missionary Society, will forgive me for recalling a story he told at a women’s missionary meeting in my wife’s drawing-room at Upper Tooting. The ladies were interested and charmed by his stories of Chinese women and girls and their life, but the *dénouement* of one story of a conversion made them gasp. An elderly Chinaman was converted. He wanted his wife to become a Christian. The Chinese are proverbial for their conservative clinging to tradition.

The lady obstinately refused to change her religion. The husband was determined that she should. Every method of peaceful persuasion having failed, he shut her up for a week in a room with nothing but rice and water and a St. John's Gospel. At the end of the week there was no sign of grace doing its work. She was shut up for a second week with the same fare and the Gospel, and was 'encouraged' by a firmly administered chastisement. At the end of the week the neophyte husband demanded if she would *now* be a Christian. 'That woman,' concluded Mr. Bitton, 'is now one of the finest Christian workers on that station.' Some of the ladies wondered how long it took her to sing with complete rapture, 'Grace, 'tis a charming sound.'

At a Boxmoor Brotherhood meeting there sat in the front row an old gentleman with sparkling eyes, who vigorously nodded approval at anything that specially appealed to him. At the close, shaking hands with him, I asked how old he was. 'I shall be a hundred next January,' he said. He was Society Steward of a Primitive Methodist Church in North London, and his name was Nelson. I told Mr. Nelson Bitton about him. He said, 'Yes, he is, like myself, a descendant of a collateral branch of Lord Nelson's family. He celebrated his centenary by raising a fund of £200 to clear the chapel debt.'

For many years I treasured in my list of friends that genial and simple soul John Kirk, secretary of the Shaftesbury Society and Ragged School Union. He ranked with Dr. Barnardo as the 'adopted father' of the

children of the poorest of the poor. Once at a Brotherhood anniversary at Seven Kings, when I was a fellow speaker, he gave a whimsical localized address on 'Seven Kings'—Drin-king, Thin-king, and so on. It was a startling surprise to himself, and a delight to his friends, when the Marquis of Northampton took him, on the jubilee Anniversary of his Secretaryship, to present him to the King at Buckingham Palace. After shaking hands with him the King bade Kirk to kneel, and while he was on his knees touched him with his sword and said, 'Rise, Sir John Kirk!' That Knighthood led to a postal confusion of names. There was already a Sir John Kirk—the Army surgeon of the Crimean War, the chief of staff in Livingstone's greatest exploring expedition, the Consul at Zanzibar, who struck terror into the hearts of the slave raiders and traders. Letters to the one Sir John got delivered to the other, and so they got to know each other and became friends. Unknown to myself the explorer Sir John Kirk was living at the age of eighty in Sevenoaks, my home town. Said the Shaftesbury Society Sir John Kirk, 'Would you like to meet my namesake at Sevenoaks?' I jumped at the possibility. 'I will try and arrange,' he said, 'for you to have tea at his house with the two Sir John Kirks.' And so it was arranged. We spent a thrilling couple of hours. The house was a museum of souvenirs of Sir John's varied adventurous life. A fourth member of our little party was his beloved dog, a Scottish cairn terrier, whose doings drove the gardener to distraction. 'He will begin to burrow on one side of a shrub,' said Sir John, 'and tunnelling under the roots he will reappear on the other side.' He 'reminisced'

on his long career. He regretted that Great Britain had backed Turkey against Russia, and saved the Turkish Empire in Europe. 'The Turks,' he said, 'had no business in Europe. They should have been driven back over the Dardanelles, with their capital at Broussa.'

About Livingstone, of course, he had much to say. Livingstone was difficult to deal with, but Kirk knew as well as anybody how to manage him. They were united in a fierce hatred and unrelenting enmity to the slave raiders. They marched through hundreds of miles of country that had been populous, but was left a desert with villages in ashes and the people slaughtered, carried off to be sold or fled. Kirk registered a vow that he would fight the slave raiders and traders with all his might to the end of his life. 'Not all the stories that are told about Livingstone,' he said, 'are true. For instance, I have read in more than one *Life* that he would never permit his people to shoot if they were attacked. That is nonsense. There were times when we had to shoot if we met raiders, or people who thought we were raiders ourselves, and were bent on killing us. But we always did everything possible to avoid shooting.' Describing, in the most matter of fact way, some of the discoveries of the six years' expedition, he astonished us by the remark, 'One day we stumbled on a lake, four hundred miles long, and 1,200 feet deep—Nyassa.' Stumbled!

Coming to his Zanzibar years he warmed up as he told us of his campaign against the slave traders. The Sultan of Zanzibar was not only the ruler of the great East African island, but his territory extended over eight hundred miles of the mainland coast, and great rivers

ran into the strait and the mainland coast north and south. Kirk established a system of native espionage, and kept in close communication with patrolling British war vessels outside the territorial waters of the Sultan. He found out when slaving dhows were concealed up the rivers, had them watched, and passed on 'tips' to the British vessels, which pounced on them when they came into the open sea. With great gusto he told how one morning, going down to the harbour, he met a man whom he had not seen before. He tried him in various Arab dialects before he hit on one that the man spoke. Conversation was opened up. Kirk invited the man to his house to take coffee. Over the coffee and cigarettes the man became talkative. Kirk plied him with artful questions to find out what he was doing at Zanzibar. The man said, 'Between you and me, I have got eight hundred pieces of black ivory hidden three hundred miles up the —— river.' Mentioning the Arabic nickname by which Kirk was known, he said, '—— knows nothing about it, and he will know nothing.' 'But,' said Kirk, 'we got those eight hundred pieces of black ivory.'

He told us about a mediæval civilization that had flourished on the East Coast. An heretical Moslem sect had been forced into exile from Persia. It established itself at several trading stations on the coast, bringing Persian arts and industries with it, and before Vasco da Gama had rounded the Cape of Good Hope the Persian settlers carried on a thriving sea-faring trade with Asia. Kirk had picked up many valuable examples of Persian pottery and metal work that had been preserved in the families of African chiefs, who had forgotten their

origin, and were persuaded to sell them. We were privileged to admire them.

By a queer coincidence I was preaching the next Sunday morning in the Sevenoaks Baptist Church. Among the notices was this: 'The Ladies' Sewing Meeting will meet on Wednesday afternoon to make garments for our Nyassa Mission'—on the lake that had been so casually 'stumbled on.'

One day there came to me at *The Christian World* a poplar-straight man, passing six feet in height, aristocratic from head to feet. 'Have a good look at me. Who am I?' he said. I had a good look. He seemed faintly familiar. Memory travelled back forty years or so to the Wolverhampton of the Mid-'eighties. At last I asked, 'Are you Dauncey?' 'I am,' he said, as we shook hands. I remembered him as a slim, bookish junior reporter, who seemed too fine for his work, under me at *The Express and Star*. The call that will not be denied had come to him, and sent him to New Guinea to carry on the work of the martyred James Chalmers, killed while stepping between two warring cannibal tribes and urging them to cease fighting. Henry Dauncey was a worthy fellow worker with Abel in humanizing the Papuans. On his retirement he lived at Bournemouth, where he died in 1932.

#### THE NATIONAL FREE CHURCH COUNCIL

One of the 'beginnings' at which I was 'in' was that of the National Free Church Council. Often there come

back memories of such men as Monro Gibson, Alexander Mackennal, Percy Bunting, E. C. Rawlings, Robert Whyte—who was, until his recent death, the last survivor of the ‘pious founders’—all good men and true, pooling their varied gifts in the general stock. The blend of ministerial and lay leaders of the Free Churches was good both for the churches and the laymen.

Among early lay leaders were Sir Joseph Compton Rickett, the treasurer, and Sir William P. Hartley, who, with Mr. George Cadbury, was one of the most generous supporters. Sir Joseph Compton Rickett was a curious ‘original.’ He was very rich in the coal trade, but his ambition was to be recognized as a philosopher. He confided to a friend of mine that he regarded himself as the successor of Herbert Spencer as England’s leading philosophical thinker. He was a lay preacher who did not always carry his congregation with him as when, in a sermon at a Primitive Methodist Church, on Ruth, he described the gleaner in Boaz’s field as ‘a forward hussy.’ He was given to purple passages that were usually much too highly coloured. In an address at a meeting of sympathy with the martyred Armenians he pictured the slaughtered as ‘walking with bleeding feet the fields of amaranth.’ Once he said, ‘In these days the fires of hell are burning low.’ I was wicked enough to whisper to the reporter at my side, ‘Wouldn’t he like to get the contract!’ He published a novel, *A Modern Caliban*, on the idea of a man born a savage gradually discovering that he had a soul. I reviewed the book, but it was hard reading. When in the 1906 Election Silas K. Hocking was standing for Parliament, I wrote a paragraph stating that he would be,



if elected, the first Free Church novelist to enter the House of Commons. Sir Joseph wrote an indignant letter complaining that we had forgotten him. For a Member of Parliament and a man of much miscellaneous speaking he was strangely unconscious of the feeling of his audiences. I heard him make quite good speeches and I heard him also make speeches so dreary and long drawn out that the audiences cried 'Time' and scraped the floor with their feet. He was seen at his best as the gracious host of fifty or sixty guests at successive Conferences of the National Free Church Council. I am sure the saddest day of his life was when, after the Hull Conference, it fell to him to inform Rev. Thomas Law that it had been decided to terminate his General Secretaryship of the organization which he had done so much to build up. I travelled to that Conference with Mr. Law, who was in the circle of my most intimate friends, and with whom from the beginning of his secretaryship I had discussed the schemes that sprang up in his fertile brain. There was no greater Organizer of victory in the Free Churches. On the way down he indulged in reminiscences of his life—his marriage, his shipwreck, the almost miraculous growth of the Council, its golden days when with legitimate pride he recalled how a hundred and twenty of the acknowledged leaders of the Free Church denominations placed themselves at his disposal.

Sir William P. Hartley was interested in my work for the lay preachers. He provided prizes for the students of a School for Lay Preachers which I organized at Surrey Chapel in 1902. Later, when I proposed that he should pay half the cost of £5 worth of books if lay preachers

would pay the other half, he jumped at the opportunity. 'How much will it cost me?' he asked. 'I hope it will cost you £1,000,' I said, 'but I fear it will not.' He hoped it would cost more. With Professor A. S. Peake, whose friendship with Sir William was as that of son to father, I compiled a list of books from which the lay preachers were to choose their £5 worth. I thought that Dr. Peake had chosen books that unduly flattered the intelligence of the men. As it happened, a large number evidently thought, in Carlyle's phrase, that they needed 'something craggy to whet the mind on.' The response surprised us all. The £1,000 mark was soon passed. Sir William seemed to think that there was a sort of bet on between him and myself. A card would come most days, 'Figure to-day £2,000,' and it mounted till it reached £7,000. I am sure that he got more satisfaction over being called on to pay £3,500 than if he had made £50,000 extra profit in his business.

As regards that business, he told me at dinner at his house one Sunday that he began in a small house with practically no capital, making the jam himself. When he advanced to a small factory he vowed to set apart a definite portion of the profits as 'the Lord's Portion.' He confessed that as the business grew he began to ask himself if he ought to take such large amounts as might have been very profitably used to increasing the capital for extensions, but he always fought down any temptation in that direction. 'It gives me no qualm,' he said, 'to distribute the Lord's Portion. I am its business administrator and I give to that administration all the business ability at my command. But if it comes to £5 outside the

Lord's Portion, I have to fight the old Devil every time.' He took me over his Aintree factory once at the usual distribution of bonuses to employees—bonuses that sometimes amounted to £50,000 a year. He said, 'I demand the best service. I work hard in the business myself. I see to the smallest details of the manufacture. I have spent much money on making the factory as hygienic and congenial as possible. I have built a fine Institute and provided other amenities. I pay higher wages than any other firm in the trade, and on the top of all I give this bonus, apportioned according to my observation of the work of the employees. Do not think, however, that I do all this as a philanthropist, I do it as a good business man. I get the best service and get twopence a pound more for my jam. Cheerful workers are worth half as much again as the discontented.'

Once during a Conference in Liverpool he invited me to dine with him at the Liberal Club. During the meal he asked the waiter to summon the head-waiter. When the man appeared, Sir William said, 'I have spoken to you before about the poor quality of the ginger-ale you have been serving lately. If it is not improved I shall make a complaint to the Committee.' When Sir William went to the pay-desk the head-waiter came and whispered to me, 'The ginger-ale's all right, sir. It is the end of the jam-making season. The old man's tongue always gets furry till he has had his holiday at Llandrindod Wells. There will be no complaints about the ginger-ale when he returns.'

Once after the day's meetings at a National Council Conference there was a circle of bright spirits relaxing

with stories, repartee and quips of all sorts. Sir William drew up his chair to the circle. To him it was a riotous 'Night out.' He so hugely enjoyed himself that when a daughter at eleven o'clock came up and begged him to go to bed or he would be poorly the next day, he refused to leave the circle.

In the October following the outbreak of the Great War Mr. William Ward came to me with a letter from Professor Massé, of the University of Lille, telling of the great distress in that industrial city with the men of military age at the front, the factories closed, none left but the women, the children, the old and the infirm, a famine-like shortage of food, fuel, clothes and boots. Mr. Ward and I agreed that as we had had two memorable Brotherhood Crusades in Lille we must do something in the way of starting an Allies' Relief Fund, the first proceeds to be devoted to Lille. I wrote the same night to inform Sir William of what we were proposing to do and asking if he could give us a small donation. By return of post I received a letter with a cheque for £100 and half-an-hour later came a telegram—'£100 not enough. Another £100 on the way.'

## CHAPTER X

### 'FANCY RELIGIONS'

*A Seventh Day Adventist Missionary—A Prophet in Sandwich Boards—'The Peculiar People'—'Perfect Holiness' and Hundred-Guinea Counsel's Fees—Pre-Millenarianism—Spiritualism—'Oahyee'—A Young Turk and 'Camel-loads of Commentaries'—A Christian Science Pioneer—Barnum Methods in Missions—Anglo-Israelitism—Vegetarianism as a Religion—Are Dogs Immortal?—'Song of Solomon' as Spiritual Symbolism*

THE story goes that a verger of a Cathedral, when a party of Anglo-Catholics visited it on pilgrimage and knelt before the shrines of various saints, told them that 'fancy religions are not allowed here.' It has been my business to come into contact with many 'fancy religions.' I look with tolerant eyes on any religion out of which people can extract spiritual nourishment, but some of them made me wonder how they did it.

During my early Wolverhampton days there lodged in the same house a missionary of the Seventh Day Adventists. Los Angeles, California, was their Mecca before the cinema industry captured the city. The sect holds that Saturday was appointed for ever to be the Sabbath, and that in changing the Sabbath to Sunday the early Christians were guilty of Sabbath-breaking every Saturday. The Adventists observe Saturday with Judaic abstinence from every kind of work and pleasure.

The missionary was a gentlemanly, intelligent man, and coveted me for a convert. He told me of the glorious country and climate of which Los Angeles was the centre, the happy life of the Adventists on their lucrative farms and tempted me with the offer of a free passage and a good farm if I would join the believers. He was himself a farmer and told me how, one Friday, he was so absorbed in ploughing that he forgot to note the time, and found to his horror it was half-past six in the evening. He fell on his knees, confessed his sin, unspanned the horses and left the plough where it stood. He gave me copies of an admirably edited paper, expensively printed, a delight to the artistic eye. After he returned I received the paper weekly for a couple of years, and at his request sent on the names of half-a-dozen friends to be put on the free list. None of us was converted. I have often wondered how the Adventists and the cinema colony hit it off together.

Shortly after my coming to London a man began to perambulate Fleet Street and the Strand with sandwich boards informing all and sundry that the truth about religion was to be found by enquirers on Sunday evenings at an address in Bethnal Green. Thinking there was copy in it, I went on an early Sunday to the address. It was a small shop, with blinds drawn, in a side street. The door was opened by the sandwich man, who was himself the prophet. He led me into a small back room. I asked him to explain to me the truth about religion. He said the whole trouble in the world was the consequence of the breaking of the commandment forbidding to make images. Images included all representations of living things

and inanimate objects, whether painted, sculptured or drawn by pen or pencil. It was not God's will that His works should be caricatured in 'images.' The prophet was a sign-painter when the light came to him. He had painted designs for shops and had done Green Dragons, Red Lions, White Horses and the like for public-houses. His conscience no longer allowed him to work at his trade. Without committing myself, I slipped half-a-crown into his hand. As I was leaving I asked, 'Have you many converts? How do you manage to live?' He sighed and said, 'I have made no converts yet. Even my wife is an unbeliever. She insists on carrying on the business.' I had prickings of compunction when he wrote a letter of pained protest against my published 'interview.' I saw him no more in Fleet Street.

Towards the end of a summer I went to the annual demonstration of a sect, the Peculiar People, that had many adherents in East Anglia. The tenets embraced perfect holiness of the individual 'Peculiar,' faith-healing and its consequent refusal to call in a doctor in cases of illness, and the belief that a 'Peculiar' was immune from any risk of getting a fractured bone, for did not the text say, 'none of his bones shall be broken'? The demonstration was fervidly enthusiastic. The people worked themselves up to frenzy by the singing with endless repetition of verses of favourite hymns. Arms and legs were set in motion by the singing until the congregation were in an almost corybantic fury. They were mostly land-workers, and I liked the healthy, honest look of them. A long series of testimonies were given of accidents—falls from a wagon or a hayrick, throwings from horses, knocked

down by trees being felled or blown down in gales, but never once was a bone broken.

I had a chat with the leader on the tenets of the sect. 'Suppose,' I asked, 'one of your people—I don't say it is possible, but I put it as a hypothesis—suppose one of them *should* have a bone broken. What should you do?' 'We should excommunicate him. If he *did* have a bone broken that would show that he had never been truly a Peculiar—he had been among us as a wolf in sheep's clothing.' On the holiness question I pressed him. He said, 'A Peculiar has had the Old Adam so completely expelled from him that he simply cannot sin. It is beyond his power.' Alas, I saw a report in the papers two years later that that leader had himself been excommunicated on charges affecting his morality, but it was explained that his lapse proved that he had never been truly a Peculiar, or he would never have sinned.

There were several of these 'Perfect Holiness' sects. At a seaside boarding-house the hostess's daughter told me how she belonged to a Holiness Mission—the only place in the town where the pure Gospel could be had. 'I simply could not sin,' she said, 'however hard I was to try.' Her mother, who overheard the remark, said to me afterwards, 'That sounds all right in the drawing-room, but you should hear her in the kitchen when we want her to help in the washing up.'

I interviewed the founder of the largest of the Holiness movements—a barrister who contrived to amalgamate the law and the Gospel. He told me incidentally, while expounding the doctrine of the movement, that he had not felt under any conscientious obligation to give up



his practice at the Bar. There was a note of pride, that struck me as whimsical, when he told me how he 'had often made £100 in twenty minutes before a Private Bills Committee of the House of Commons.' Before I left he asked me to kneel, and he prayed fervently for myself and *The Christian World*.

No doubt these Holiness cults help many of their adherents in their religious life, but there is a dangerous side, or two dangerous sides in fact—the danger of fostering spiritual conceit and the danger of throwing susceptible people off their guard in the face of very real temptations. I pin my faith to the precept, 'Take heed how ye stand, lest ye fall.'

Another ever fertile mother of fancy religions is Pre-Millenarianism or 'Second Comingism.' No doubt the first Christians, who were inclined to a strictly literal interpretation of the figurative language of Christ and the Apostolic writers, and were much under contemporary apocalyptic influence, believed that the 'End of the Age' would come within the time of believers who were still living. Christ would reappear in the flesh, beat down all hostile powers, and there would either be a dissolution of the earth or a 'Millennial Reign' of a thousand years. As time showed, they were mistaken, but the belief has lingered on, the date being from time to time postponed. There have always been people who like to treat the Bible as a book of cryptograms. Their great stand-bys are the Books of Daniel and Revelation. The mystic '666'—'the number of the Beast'—gives them as much pious entertainment as worldly folk get out of the solution of Cross Word puzzles. From Nero and Domitian

down to Napoleon and the ex-Kaiser the 'Beast' has been confidently identified. Dr. Cumming, some while before my time, had a large following along this line. At Wolverhampton I went to a lecture by his successor, 'the Prophet Baxter.' Weird and lurid pictures draped the walls and the front of the platform. Baxter had the secrets of the future at his finger-ends. Two or three times he fixed the date of the Second Coming. The last 'tip' was, I think, 1909. But the prophet made a slip that caused the sceptics to scoff. Two years before the predicted 'end' he renewed the lease of his business premises for thirty years. Fleet Street got hold of it and made good 'copy.'

In the middle of the eighteenth century a prophet actually named the day of the year on which the world was to come to an end. Two hundred thousand people fled to Hampstead Heath as the safest place within reach!

In the old Exeter Hall days I went several years to a gathering of Millenarians in the 'Small Hall.' Usually there were half-a-dozen retired Indian Generals and Governors of Provinces, along with elderly ladies sombrely costumed, and clergymen of the Evangelical school, mostly incumbents of wealthy parishes or churches at prosperous seaside resorts. I think the authors of Daniel, the Song of Songs and the Seer of Patmos would have opened their eyes in amazement could they have heard their poetic symbolic dives into the future so confidently made applicable to the history of our own time.

For some years an American named Russell spent scores of thousands of pounds in preaching a gospel that he

called 'Millennial Dawn.' He took the Albert Hall and the Queen's Hall, bought a chapel at Lancaster Gate, and expensive literature was distributed broadcast gratuitously. There were no collections. Russell came from America, and prophets of fancy religions find in the States millionaires who, apart from millions-making, are as babes and sucklings and fall easy victims to self-confident prophets of quaint cults. The first step is to convert a multi-millionaire, and he is then tapped to the fullest extent.

After the Armistice there was a sort of Second Coming 'Revival' in this country. Several Evangelical leaders both of the Free Churches and of the Anglican Church were captured. A little group at Leicester was the centre of the cult.

Some years since an ex-American Judge honoured us with frequent visits. He took the Albert Hall, and raised the Slogan 'Millions now living will never die.' The danger of all this is that it diverts good people from taking their share in movements for making the world better. Why trouble when in three or four years Christ will come, and the world will either come to an end or He will 'put all enemies under His feet'? I knew a Rector who declined to join the local branch of the League of Nations Union because the League would not be necessary when Christ came. In a letter to a lady friend in Italy Dr. Caird, Principal of Glasgow University, told how his Scottish maid had fallen under the influence of End-of-the-World Second Comingism. There was a violent thunderstorm. The panic-stricken girl, thinking the end was come, fell on her knees and began fervently to pray. Miss Caird told her: 'If it is the end of the world, give

the silver an extra cleaning and put an extra polish on the door-knockers.' Being Scottish the girl set to work with redoubled energy.

On a wet Sunday afternoon in Guernsey I got into religious conversation with an engineer holding a very responsible position in connection with the water supply of a Midland city. We got on to spiritualism. He told me that his mother died when he was eleven. Three weeks later she appeared at his bedside, comforted him and told him things about the family life he had never heard of, but which he found on enquiry were facts. She had regularly appeared to him at short intervals, and had given him wise counsel at various crises of his life. It was not for me to suggest doubts, though I wondered why only one in millions should receive such spiritual visitations, and have always felt that if such a visitation should appear to myself I should doubt the evidence of my own fallible senses. I reviewed the (quarterly) *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, and have reviewed many books by Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Conan Doyle and other Spiritualists, but have never been convinced that the 'evidence' for spiritualism cannot be explained otherwise. I do not deny. I try to keep an open mind. The fact that there has been so much mercenary charlatanism in connection with Spiritualism is no conclusive argument against the possibility of spiritual manifestations, but I remain unconvinced.

My Guernsey friend opened out to me a still more surprising line. He was a 'Faithist' and told me an amazing story of how the revelation of 'Faithism' came to a New York business man. One day it was irresistibly 'borne in'

to him to buy a type-writer. He had never used a type-writer, nor dreamt of having one. He had not the slightest idea of how it was worked. But he *had* to buy the machine. When it arrived came the message from the unseen, 'Sit down and typewrite.' He sat down, inserted a sheet and let his fingers play over the keys. The 'messenger' told him to put away the type-written sheets without reading them. He did so. Day after day, for months, he worked at the machine, not knowing what he was writing. Then came the word, 'It is done. Put the sheets together and read them.' On doing so, he found that he had got a new Bible. The Bible was in two parts, divided by the middle of each page. The upper and the lower parts gave simultaneous accounts of events in heaven and on earth from the Creation down to the time of Christ. The Bible was called 'Oahyee.' It got its name from exclamations of Adam. When he first looked on Eden in all its beauty he gasped an 'Oh' of wonder. When he opened his eyes and saw Eve he gasped an 'Ah' of admiration. 'Oahyee' taught a doctrine that I have since thought must have been borrowed by Marie Corelli for *The Sorrows of Satan*. Those who have been the cause of others falling into sin through tempting them, or have been guilty of cruel despotism, remain in hell till every one whom they have led astray, or have brutalized and made to sin through ignorance and demoralization, have become penitent, been purged and made fit for heaven. Thus the Pharaoh of the Oppression must wait for forgiveness till the two million Israelites whom he enslaved and debased are all safe in heaven. That is not a bad doctrine of hell for tempters and tyrants.

Another really plausible doctrine is that saints are the fruition of a long line of ancestors who, in times more or less evil, had sought to live moral lives on the spiritual plane. Thus Jesus, physically and morally, was the outcome of ancestors who for four thousand years had been seekers after God, and had tried to 'walk in the light.'

The New York type-writer prophet, my Guernsey friend informed me, converted a millionaire—that was quite in order. The millionaire bought land and built a town. Missionaries were engaged who collected orphans and waifs and strays. These were sent to the town, educated in the cult, taught trades and had a really good time. I received a number of parts of 'Oahyee' and found shrewd wisdom mixed with much incomprehensible mysticism. 'Faithism' subsequently established itself in this country, but judging from the members and the practices at a 'Church' in a suburb where I lived it had degenerated into the holding of hysterical spiritualist séances, with 'prophetess' mediums.

It fell within my province at *The Christian World* to receive the inventors of many fancy religions, men from most of the Continents. Not long after the Young Turk Revolution there dropped in a Turk about forty years of age. He wished to launch a religion that should unite Christianity and Mohammedanism, retaining what was sound in each and dropping what had lost the savour of religious value or was provocatively challenging to the other side. It was a tallish order.

'I have been carefully studying,' he said, 'our Koran and your Bible. I find much that is good in each, much

in each that would be good for both of us. But here is the trouble—the good and true in our Koran is buried under two hundred camel-loads of commentaries, and as to your Bible the good and true is buried under twelve hundred camel-loads of commentaries.’ I gave publicity to the interview, but I never heard what success the Turkish reformer met with. If he survived the War, he is probably still shovelling away at the commentaries on the Koran.

When the Christian Scientists began their mission in this country I interviewed the first minister, a lady. Mrs. Eddy’s ‘First Church of Christ Scientist’ at Boston had heaps of money apparently at its disposal. A Jewish Synagogue near the Marble Arch was bought for the ‘Church’ and reading-room, always a propagandist adjunct. The minister took an expensive flat in Kensington. I was admitted by a negro liveried man-servant. Half-a-dozen ladies of the Society variety that changes its religion almost as often as it changes the fashion of its dress were waiting to be admitted to the minister’s consulting-room. Madam Blavatsky had died and Mrs. Besant had gone to cultivate Mahatmaism in India. At the end of half-an-hour my turn came. The minister was very gracious. Her room was elegantly furnished and the pictures on the walls testified to her fine taste in painting. She knew I was a journalist, and probably a sceptic, but the Christian Scientists have always invited publicity. I put many questions to her as to Mrs. Eddy’s religious philosophy—that spirit is everything, matter pure illusion, that consequently all bodily ills are illusions, since where there is no body there can be no ills attaching to it.

The lady talked eloquently and plausibly, and explained the 'ministry' as designed to remove the illusions of a material universe and a material body, and to convince seekers that we are all pure spirit in a God who is Spirit, and who Himself is the universe. All material evils are phantasms emanating from the devil. She was shrewd enough to perceive that I was a doubter. I told her I would go back to what seemed to me to be a very material office in Fleet Street and write a faithful account of the interview which I hoped was not an illusion. She 'got it back' on me in replying to my final question, 'Is it a tenet of the Christian Science Church that since the founder was a woman, and gave to the Church its bible, *Science and Health*, all the ministers must be women?' 'Oh, no!' she said, 'but Christian Science requires extraordinary intelligence to understand and explain it, and that is why the ministers are usually women.'

Since then Christian Science has opened many 'churches' in this country, and has gained a large number of adherents, mostly women, among people who retain their membership of ordinary denominations. It has the asset of a sound psychic principle, that of believing oneself out of a morbid condition of body or mind, that was distinctly held by the early Church, and has support among leading mental specialists. M. Coué, with his therapeutic philosophy, and the directors of Faith-healing Homes, practise what is in essence Christian Science 'treatment.' I have heard of cases of neurotic women who have been restored to a much healthier condition of mind by Christian Science suggestion, but why mix it up with the absurd metaphysic of Mrs. Eddy,



and why convert into expensive 'practice' with well-to-do patients what pretends to be a spiritual religion?

Mark Twain's last book was a study of Christian Science doctrine and methods. These evidently 'riled' Mark. He told how, at the Christian Scientist bookshop in Boston, he had to plank down four apparently very solid dollars on to an apparently very solid counter for a particularly solid copy of *Science and Health*. He had been reading Christian Scientist 'testimonies.' Falling from an apparently solid house a Christian Scientist builder—why build illusionary houses?—would exclaim, 'God is All,' and he would land on the apparently solid earth without injury. Or a man on a bucking broncho would be tossed into the air, and falling head downwards on to a pile of broken stones would repeat the same formula, 'God is All,' and not one sharp-edged illusory stone would cut or break his illusory head.

'When I read such stories,' said Mark, 'I am tempted to wish that Noah and his family had failed to catch that Ark.'

Ought I to include among fancy religions the teaching and methods of certain American missionaries who have come to this country? I heard Moody and Sankey in my youth. Moody was a shrewd level-headed man who talked 'horse sense' on religion and made it real to his hearers, while his obvious sincerity and inspired earnestness made an irresistible appeal. Some of his successors 'rubbed me on the raw.' There was too much Barnum about their methods. They were advertised *à la* 'The Greatest Show on Earth.' Nothing short of a choir of a thousand, singing hymns of sugary pious sentiment, with tunes of

negro origin or composed by men who played down to the lovers of the trashiest 'popular' tinkly music, would satisfy them. The singing man of the two would whirl half-round, with tempestuous coat tails, while conducting the choir. The evangelist had learnt all the tricks of working on the feelings of an emotional crowd. His 'Gospel' was usually of the crudest kind. At the end of the address there would be an 'appeal.' The congregation were invited to keep their eyes closed, while those who had been moved to declare themselves converts were requested to stand and then sit down again. The evangelist would triumphantly count them off, sometimes to the number of hundreds. As a rule a committee of wealthy people, with some titled people on it, guaranteed the finances. What the Missioners were paid was kept a strict secret, but a suite of rooms at the costliest hotel 'was good enough for them.'

After one such mission I was told that a list of nearly six hundred converts had been handed in by the evangelist. The 'converts' were distributed on probation among the churches before being received into membership. It was found that most of them got 'converted' at every mission that came round. In the end only about thirty new members were added to the churches. I thought of the stories of 'conversions' of Teutons in early Christian history. Men of tribes on the Rhine were 'converted' sixteen or eighteen times—they received a new shirt to be baptized in at each conversion.

Our churches have learned their lesson. They fight shy now of professional evangelists of the American type. They follow the sounder method of endeavouring to

make their own spiritual impression on their own people.

If I have said so much about 'Fancy Religions' it is because now, as always, I am a friend and helper of the churches. I believe that without the churches and their work, without the men and women they create, without the spirit they infuse into politics and business and social life this country would be infinitely the poorer. I do not like interest to be switched off from a reasonable religion that will commend itself to the modern mind, moralize modern life, make for tolerance and good temper, be the spiritual dynamic of progress and convert homes into 'little heavens here below,' and switched on to cranks and conceits that isolate their devotees from the mass of religious people and choke off large numbers from religion altogether. There is an increasing proportion of churches in which there is a brave and honest attempt to face the real problems of religion, and to present a religion that meets alike the reasonable demands of the modern mind and of the changeless human heart. It is grave damage to the age when fantastic cults lay themselves out to weaken the impact of the churches on the world by drawing off the ignorant and impressionable who rush after novelty and are the prey of uncontrolled emotion.

When I was at Wolverhampton I was often waylaid by an Alderman who was so 'Anglo-Israelite' that when I saw him in the distance I made for the nearest side street. He would buttonhole me and demonstrate by quotation of many texts that the English are descendants of the lost tribes. Manifestly with Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, the Cape, our strategical island position to the

West of Europe, a Fleet that 'rules the waves' we are in possession of the 'gates' promised to Israel, and to us is committed the mission of bringing the whole world under the dominion of the Messiah. It was no use pointing out how many unmistakable Jews there are in the world, carrying the evidence of their pedigree in their faces, their habits, their religion and scattered throughout every nation. Equally vain was it to recall that 'Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,' Pict and Scot, Irish and Cymric, Gaul and Teuton. All the invading strains had been identified and labelled as one or other of the Lost Tribes driven by prophetic destiny to unite in the general body in our tight little island. Mark Twain had not yet detected the reference to our race in the Beatitude, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' I have met many Anglo-Israelites since then. They tell me how the discovery floods with light much that is otherwise obscure in the Old Testament. The theory at least leads to much searching of the Scriptures, and that is a good thing. The Anglo-Israelites have a monthly paper of their own. They do not regard themselves as a separate Church, for according to the theory we are all Anglo-Israelites. They are as a rule loyal members of their several churches.

Vegetarianism has its religious side. A former manager of the Thames Ironworks was an apostle of a vegetarian 'Back to Eden' religion. I had several talks with him. He believed that eating the flesh of animals was not only sin in itself, involving the murder of the animals, but that the carnivorous habit fostered the brute passions. I was kindly disposed towards vegetarianism on purely hygienic

grounds, but after several experiments found it impossible to keep it up. The women must be converted, and become skilled in vegetarian cookery, before the cult has a fair chance. One day, at a vegetarian restaurant, I chatted with a curate at the other side of the table. He said he was theologically a convert to vegetarianism, 'but what,' he asked plaintively, 'am I to do? I am married, my wife is not a convert, she will not study vegetarian cookery, and she insists that I need a proportion of flesh food to keep me fit.'

At a vegetarian exhibition a young lady stall-keeper tried hard to convert me. There were not only vegetarian foods, but vegetarian 'wool' and 'leather' goods. She rubbed it into me that those who ate animals' flesh absorbed all the animal passions. 'But,' I pleaded, 'I eat only the flesh of cattle and sheep, the mildest animals in creation, and totally abstain from eating the flesh of wolves, tigers and gorillas.' I regretted the apology when I saw how disconcerted she was at not having been furnished with a suitable reply. Even before, I fear, she had given me up as a reprobate, for when she showed me the vegetarian boots I invented a story of an enthusiast who wore them. On a hot day he fell asleep under a shady tree on Clapham Common, and woke up to find that grazing sheep had nibbled away the soles. I believe Bournemouth is a stronghold of vegetarian religion, for I used to receive copies of the nicely printed organ of 'The Order of the Golden Rule.'

I should very much like, as a lover of dogs, to believe in the future life of good animals. Canon Wilberforce, of Westminster Abbey, hoped to meet his beloved dogs in

heaven. I interviewed the President of a Dogs' Friend Society at a beautiful house in an outer London Suburb. Two lovely large dogs, with brown eyes that glowed with affection as the animals wagged their tails, wore garlands of flowers round their necks. Their owner-lover said that he was convinced his dogs had souls as much as himself, that God loved dogs as much as He did humanity, and that if he did not believe there would be places in heaven for his dogs he would not want to go there himself. With such views, of course, a man can be no other than a vegetarian, and no doubt he looks to a golden day when the jungles of the world will be the homes of tigers, lions, leopards and other ferocious beasts who have become harmless feeders on berries, nuts, juicy leaves and lush grass.

A member of a vegetarian family told me that he had an eighteen-year-old sister who would cycle fifty miles in the day, dance till three in the morning after it, and rise 'fresh as a daisy' at eight. But I should say one needs to be brought up to it from the cradle to do that.

## CHAPTER XI

### 'NATIONS SPEAKING UNTO NATIONS'

*First International Congregational Council—Scrooby, Plymouth and Leyden—First Baptist World Congress—Coloured D.D.s and 'Broilers'—Comedy at Trinity College, Cambridge—German Church Leaders' Peace Delegation to England—British 'Ghostlies'—Peace Delegation to Germany—Kaiser's 'Gentlemen and Brothers'—Von Tirpitz and Shakespeare—The Unlosable Hat—Canada from Coast to Coast—Political and Industrial Conditions—How Methodism captured British Columbia—The Canadian Press—Factor's Life on Hudson Bay*

As a journalist, sometimes as a participant, though always seizing the opportunities for good 'copy,' I have been present at many International Conferences and other International functions at home and abroad. The churches, during the years since 1890, have taken an increasing active part in the creation of a friendly Internationalism. In 1892 the first International Congregational Council was held in London. It brought a hundred Americans and a hundred from the British Dominions. There was much Anglo-American glorification of Puritan and Pilgrim forbears. One American so exalted Calvinism, which was anathema to Dr. Joseph Parker, that he said he had had the pulpit fumigated the next morning. Dr. Northrop, the American joint

President with Dr. Dale, evidently thought the glorification was being overdone. He said, 'What great and noble men our Puritan fathers were! How proud we are of them! And how glad we are that we do not have to live with them!' I went on various pilgrimages with the Americans. We went to Scrooby, where the founders of New England formed their Independent Church. With Dr. Amory Bradford, of Montclair, New Jersey, a lineal descendant of William Bradford, first Governor of Massachusetts, I walked along the road to where there was a turning down to Austerfield, the village birthplace of William Bradford. Dr. Bradford was treating himself to the luxury of a first visit to the home of his history-making ancestor. We went to Plymouth, to see the place on the Barbican Quay where the *Mayflower* lay at anchor before sailing out on the great venture of faith. The Mayor of Plymouth gave a luncheon. It was mid-July and there were piled-up dishes of Devon's luscious raspberries and bowls of Devonshire cream and junket. These were great joys to the modern Pilgrims. Sitting opposite an American lady, I asked if I might pass the raspberries. 'I guess you may,' she enthusiastically replied. Another asked a compatriot, 'Will you kindly urge the cream?' A minister told me that at lunches and dinners given to them in London nothing appealed more than the big gooseberries then in their prime. He confessed regretfully that America can do great things, but it cannot grow gooseberries.

I went with them to Holland where a tablet to John Robinson, the Pilgrims' pastor, who gave to them his famous farewell at Delft Haven, was to be unveiled on



the outside of the church opposite to where he lived. There was a special service, and Dutch ladies wore their gala national costume. The gold and lace head-dresses enraptured the American ladies. We all wondered at the leisurely Dutch hymn-singing. The Dead March in *Saul* would sound like a Fox Trot compared with it. We visited The Hague, and saw the pictures in the National Gallery. Before the famous *Bull*, after *Paul Potter*, Americans retailed the chestnut of their countryman who gazed long at the picture and then asked, 'But where's Potter?'

The first Baptist World Congress met in the Queen's Hall. There was a large contingent of coloured American Southern Baptists. One of them, who must have scaled twenty stone, found the July heat so oppressive that, seated in the front row of the auditorium, he kept falling asleep, and had to be constantly awakened by his brethren because his bassoon-like snores threatened to drown the speaking. With the Baptists I visited Elstow, where we rang the bells of the Parish Church and Dr. Clifford gave a talk on Bunyan, pointing out local scenes and places on which Bunyan had drawn for incidents of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Holy War*. There was a very interesting visit also to Cambridge. I travelled down in a compartment with five coloured D.D.s as companions. One of them, very excitedly, called his brethren to the window. There was a lot of chickens in a field. 'The finest lot of broilers I ever saw,' said the doctor, and his brethren concurred. That, no doubt, was an atavistic

interest. Luncheon was given by the Master of Trinity in Trinity College Hall. College dons distributed themselves among the guests. The waiters, of course, are exceedingly dignified functionaries, more dignified-looking than some Bishops. I was seated near to a Baptist minister and his wife from some country town in the Middle West. The lady, looking innocently into the face of a Don who had been chatting with her, asked, 'Say, sir, is Trinity College a Baptist College?' I shall always admire the Don for his self-restraint, and the waiter, who was just serving the lady, for not dropping the dish. In one of the 'Backs' a Don was asked, 'How long does it take to get a lawn so smooth and velvety as this?' 'About seven hundred years' was the reply. That evidently sank into a citizen of a country that had only been discovered four hundred years before.

The Baptist World Congress has led to an almost miraculous growth of Baptist world fellowship. My friend Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, as Baptist Commissioner for Europe, has played a great part since the War in the linking up of scattered Baptist communities in many countries, and in powerfully protesting against persecution of his brethren in Rumania and other countries that fail to reconcile national independence with religious liberty.

Four years before the War Mr. J. Allen Baker, M.P., was President of the Metropolitan Free Church Federation. He was a passionate Quaker apostle of peace. He had diligently cultivated leaders of the German Churches

and outstanding Reich statesmen. He proposed that all the Churches of Germany should be invited to send a united delegation to England, to be the guests of the united British Churches. The proposal was warmly approved on both sides, and during Mr. Baker's year of office the Germans came over—Protestant State Churchmen, leaders of Free Churches, Roman Catholics. With Rev. Thomas Law and Rev. George Hooper I went to Southampton to meet them. They were five hours late, for the ship had grounded in a fog on a sandbank shortly after leaving Bremen. The Mayor of Southampton drove us round to see a nursery of rhododendrons and other interesting things in the county. When the *Princesse Cécilie* arrived, there was a Mayoral reception, with the united singing together of *God save the King* and *Heil Dir in Siegerkranz*. The floodgates of ten days of continuous oratory were unlocked. There were mutual protestations during those ten days of eternal friendship between the two kindred Protestant peoples, and declarations that war between Great Britain and Germany was 'unthinkable.' The protestations and declarations were sincere enough at that time, but there were men behind the Kaiser at the Wilhelmstrasse, at the German Admiralty and on the German General Staff who willed war and not peace, and they were to have their way.

The following year there was a return visit of an equally composite party, 140 in all, Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops and Canons, leaders of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and Ireland and ministers and laymen of the Free Church communions, including the Unitarians. The arrangements were again left to the Metropolitan Free

Church Federation, of which Rev. George Hooper was President, and Rev. William Thomas—the Germans called him 'Tōmah'—was Secretary. I was honoured by being one of the delegation. The Germans 'did us well,' almost too well, from the banquet they gave us on board the *Meteor* at Dover till our return landing at Southampton from the *Bremen*. At Hamburg, Bremen, Berlin, Eisenach and other towns we were welcomed as 'brothers beloved.' There was a renewal of protestations of eternal friendship and war was more 'unthinkable' than ever. At Berlin Dr. Dryander preached to us in the Domkirche. The Kaiser received us at the Palace and gave us tea at the 'New Palace' at Potsdam. He wore the uniform of a Colonel of a British regiment. He addressed us as 'Gentlemen and Brothers'—we were told he had added 'and Brothers' to the MS. in pencil. Was he sincere? Subsequent revelations cast serious doubt on it. Some members of our party believe that he deliberately threw dust in our eyes. At a reception and dinner in the Prussian Senate House we met Prince Hohenlohe, then Imperial Chancellor, Admiral von Tirpitz and other notables. I had a brief chat with Von Tirpitz, but it was an exchange of statements that he had read Shakespeare in German and I had read Goethe. There is no doubt that he, anyway, was at the time preparing for war to deprive Great Britain of the 'ruling of the waves.' By the way, at a reception given to us in the Elster Park at Hamburg, the band played *Rule Britannia*.

When we reached Berlin, the Burgomaster welcomed us at the station. Rev. George Hooper is a very portly Yorkshireman, but the Burgomaster could have given him

three or four stone and a beating. Mr. Hooper will never hear the last of the scene when the Burgomaster, completely surprising him, embraced him and kissed him on his two flaming cheeks. The Germans had got up English with which to greet us. One host hurried along the platform crying, 'I search my ghost.' A member of the delegation told of a Munich Catholic priest who had looked into an English New Testament, with the aid of a dictionary. He proudly showed his familiarity with our language, as when he remarked, 'As you English say, "Ze ghost he wills, but ze meat he is not enough strong."'

Our Berlin hosts and hostesses were kindness itself. They had been asked to take us into their family life and make no difference in their manner of living. Bedrooms in many cases were festooned with wreaths of oak leaves. The Temperance movement was in its infancy in Germany. That is why hosts to whom Presbyterians, or 'ghostlies' with Scottish names, were allocated, thoughtfully placed a couple of bottles of whisky in the bedrooms—in some cases, the guests were almost fanatical teetotallers. At one of the Berlin dinners a Professor of world-wide reputation, leaning over my chair, drew my attention to the name of a wine on the menu. 'I should take that,' he whispered. 'It costs 30 marks the flasche.' A witty Baptist D.D. said later, 'They were the finest wines I never drank.'

Those luncheons and dinners began at last to pall on us, and the general feeling was expressed by one delegate who wished that he might make a meal of bread and cheese and an onion for a change. As to the speaking,

after the second day nobody listened. There was a toast and a response between course and course, and as the courses were numerous a dinner would last from half-past seven to half-past eleven. An 'Excellency' would have thought it beneath his dignity to talk for less than twenty minutes. The talk streamed on to an accompaniment of conversation, and laughter at the exchange of good stories. Protestant Free Churchman though I am, I enjoyed hearty good fellowship with Roman Catholic confrères. There was a learned Benedictine monk who told me he was engaged on the revision of the text of the Vulgate. He had just spent six months in Spanish monasteries, collating ancient MSS. of the Vulgate text. The Pope had entrusted the work to his Order, and it would take thirty years to complete what would become the Authorized Version for the Roman Catholic world. He enjoyed the choice cigars and wines. 'We monks,' he said, 'have few pleasures apart from the enjoyment of our religion, and we make the most of such innocent worldly pleasures as are allowable.'

I spent a happy evening next to a retired Roman Catholic Canon, past his seventieth year. We found so much of common interest that I ventured to say, 'Father, do you think there is any hope of us meeting in heaven?' With a merry twinkle, he replied, 'That is a very difficult problem to propose to a Catholic priest. I will go as far as this, however—I think you will stand an equal chance with some of our tenth-century Popes, but I warn you, they were among the greatest rascals that ever lived.' Raising his glass, he said, 'Anyway, let us drink to the Catholic Church of Jolly Good Fellows.' One of the

greatest humorists of our party was Monsignor Grosch, who convulsed us with his inexhaustible budget of good stories told in a rich unctuous voice. It was dangerous, we found, to attempt to 'pull the leg' of a Roman Catholic dignitary. Rev. J. G. Stevenson, an incorrigible leg-puller, tried it in Luther's room in the Wartburg at Eisenach. 'How do you feel, Monsignor,' he asked, 'at being in Luther's room?' 'I would rather be in Luther's room than in his company,' he flashed.

My Berlin hosts were a most charming devoted couple, with two children. The host was a merchant, who had spent several years in German and British Colonies. He told me how no man with experience in both would be fool enough to risk money in a German Colony. The officials' one idea was to tie down the man endeavouring to establish an industry or build up trade with the most vexatious restrictions, and if he began to make money to tax away all his profits. As to the Kaiser, he said, 'The Kaiser is a clever man, and all we Germans revere him as Head of the Reich, but every time the Kaiser opens his mouth in public, all we Germans tremble. He cannot resist saying dangerously provocative things, and the Imperial Chancellor has to do his best to explain them away.' In common with the rest of our party, I was given a latchkey and advised to see life Unter den Linden at midnight. Two minister friends who had studied in Germany would take me, after the dinner, to some Unter den Linden café for coffees and smokes, and it was sometimes two in the morning when we took taxis to our hosts and let ourselves in.

On that Sunday in Berlin my host and hostess went to

their own Evangelical Church while I attended the Domkirche service. I went home believing I should find lunch ready, but the Herr and Frau were dressed to go out. They explained that their habit was, having completed their morning devotion, to spend the rest of the day out, and following the injunction to hosts, they would take me with them. They took me to the Thiergarten to lunch—Berlin's favourite Sunday lunch resort. The Frau asked kindly about my wife, and buying a picture postcard wrote to her saying, 'We are so glad to have your husband as our guest.' After lunch we strolled round to see the animals, or listened to music, till five o'clock. My host said, 'We will now take you to the oldest and most historic Beerhouse in Berlin.' To the Beerhouse we went, and had various *delicatessen* of the cold sausage family to eat. I was shown the chairs and the pewter mugs reserved for the use of members of the Kaiser's entourage and of the General Staff. Lastly I was taken to the great Rheingold Restaurant at half-past seven for dinner. We got talking about Unter den Linden after midnight. My host said, 'That is harmless enough, but there is a night side of Berlin life that is not harmless. When I was a young man I knew more than was good for me of that night life, but God did send me this angel from heaven, and now my wife and I go to church together and live Christian lives and we are very happy.' I said smilingly, 'God evidently sent you much better than you deserved.' The good Frau gave me a heavenly smile, and said, 'I must learn English, so that you may bring your own nice Frau, and I shall be able to talk to her.' Often during the War I thought very kindly of my



Berlin hosts and other good friends made during that visit.

The arrangements for our convenience and comfort were a triumph of German attention to detail. Never once had we to concern ourselves about our baggage. Always it was at our hosts' when we arrived, or at the station when we reached it on leaving. In fact, the efficiency was appalling. A Monsignor wanted to visit the famous Catholic Seminary at Fulda in Saxony, and bought a new hat for the occasion. He left the old hat at his host's. As the train was leaving, a member of the baggage corps rushed up in consternation and thrust the hat into the Monsignor's hand in the compartment. Twice or thrice he furtively pushed it under a seat in the train or on a station platform, but lynx eyes were watching him, and the hat was always retrieved and forced upon him—it would have been a shooting matter if any baggage man had allowed it to go astray. The unhappy Monsignor was simply haunted by that hat. As we steamed out of Bremen on the homeward journey, and were watching a crowded emigrant ship, a gust of wind swept Silas K. Hocking's cloth cap into the sea. 'Thank goodness,' he said, 'we are now where we are able to lose a hat if we want to!'

In 1912, when I was Brotherhood National President, I was invited, with my wife, to visit Canada. It was possible to accept the invitation. The Presidency, and the fact of being known in Canada as a journalist and a book-writer, gave me access to the outstanding personalities of

the Dominion. I was to do much oratory, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but I intended to gather all I could about the country and its people with a view to 'Specials' and a book. Mr. Thomas Howell, then the Canadian Northern Railway's chief emigration agent, and secretary of the Canadian Brotherhood Movement, planned our tour. The Canadian Northern was our host on sea and land as far as Montreal and back; the Canadian Pacific gave us its hospitality from Montreal to Vancouver and back. We were given a *suite de luxe* on the *Royal Edward*. We steamed from Avonmouth at the beginning of October and crossed on a smooth sea bathed in sunshine. I had been overworked, and lounging in a deck chair in the sunshine made me 'fit.' I picked up much preliminary knowledge, and some good stories, from Canadians on board. A Toronto man told of a Chicago man who went into a Toronto 'phone office and asked to be put on to Ottawa. 'What's the charge?' he asked. 'Three-quarters of a dollar.' 'Three-quarters?' he cried. 'Why, I could 'phone to hell from Chicago for ten cents.' 'Ah, yes,' said the young lady, with a sweet smile, 'but that is within the city boundary.'

The American Presidential election, at which Woodrow Wilson was elected, was in full blast. There was a story of a candidate in a country town, a star spell-binder, who was interrupted several times by a man with the request to 'speak up!' The orator suddenly switched off from the line of his speech to a purple patch of amazing eloquence:

'At the last great day of the summing up of all things, when the Archangel Gabriel sounds the trumpet of judgment, when the thunders crash from pole to pole,

when the mountains fall and the earth opens, when the sea gives up its dead, there will be some blanked fool from this burg shouting, "Speak up!"'

Talk turning on the overwhelming preponderance of young men in the Prairie Provinces, and the opening of parts of Northern Ontario and other Provinces, there was a story of the demand for wives. 'Thirty thousand Canadians,' said a Canadian paper, 'are calling across the Atlantic, "Send us wives!"' An English paper retorted, 'Thirty thousand English husbands send back the offer, "Take ours!"'

As we steamed up the St. Lawrence, watching the little towns and villages on the Quebec shore, a business man of London, Ont., and I discussed the Protection question. He said he had been studying the question in England for six months. 'If I were an Englishman,' he said, 'I should be a confirmed Free Trader. You are an established manufacturing country. You have a long pull on all rivals. In your most profitable industries few can compete with you. You need the freest intercourse with the world market. If you put up tariffs, your rivals can hit you back much harder than you can hit them. But here in Canada I am a Protectionist. Look at those villages, beautiful, idyllic, embowered among trees, clustered round their church towers. Lovely, but you can't build up a great nation on pig feeding and dairying. We must have manufacturing industries, but as soon as we start them America, or yourselves, flood us with your goods and stifle our industries in their cradle.'

Later, at Hamilton, Ont., where there are great branch works of American firms, I heard the same tale. Tariffs

had forced the Americans to build on the Canadian side. They brought capital into Canada. Canadian labour was largely employed, and was being trained in manufacturing efficiency. That sounded pretty convincing, but further West the farmers were complaining that their interests were being heavily sacrificed for the benefit of the older Provinces and their nascent industries. They were forced to pay through the nose for everything in the mechanical or the timber line that had to be imported to them. In those timberless Prairie Provinces tariffs made them pay 100 per cent. more even for their coffins. They may largely emancipate themselves when such towns as Moose Jaw and Medicine Hat, which were laying themselves out to be manufacturing centres, have got into their stride. There are boundless mineral resources waiting to be exploited in the Far West, and the natural gas at Medicine Hat, in the Bow River Valley of Alberta and other places, supplies light, heat and power at a cost that might turn a British manufacturer green with envy.

It is not my purpose to give details of a thoroughly enjoyable tour that had to be crowded into five short weeks. The trouble in Canadian politics, I found, was the same as in London municipal government—only a very small minority took the slightest interest in elections. Everybody is keen on 'making his pile' and grudges time diverted from pursuit of the 'main chance.' This gives their opportunity to the log-rollers and the axe-grinders. Speaking at a Toronto meeting, along with the leader of the Liberal Party in the Ontario Legislature, the leader wished that in the Dominion the people took anything

like the same interest in national politics as the people do in Great Britain.

That same pursuit of the dollar prejudicially affects church work and literature. Often I was told that well-to-do Canadians will give money to churches on a princely scale, but they will not give that personal service which is the strength and glory of church life in Great Britain. To give such service would mean missing business chances. The refusal of service by the prosperous—there are shining exceptions—sets a bad example to the rank and file. I told a gathering of ministers at Montreal of the very fine orchestras created by many of our English Brotherhoods. 'Are the players paid?' I was asked. I said they gladly gave their services without pay. 'Ah!' said a minister with a sigh, 'it isn't like that in our country. If we tried to make an orchestra every man, as soon as he could play *God save the King* would want to be paid two dollars each time.'

I had a very interesting chat with the chief librarian of the State Library at Toronto. He said that Canada was still living too close to the soil, and still lacked the intellectual background, to create a national literature and art. If a young man showed marked literary or artistic capacity he was driven to seek a career in the United States or in Great Britain. Canada must be given another century to make the soil and generate the atmosphere in which native literature and art would flourish.

Those new towns of the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia were fascinating to my wife and myself. We saw at Moose Jaw and Medicine Hat cities growing while we waited. Winnipeg was a marvel with its Main Street,

its Stores that rivalled Selfridge's and Harrods, its railway station that might have been Euston. Winnipeg does not hide its light under a bushel. On some of its shop fronts were such inscriptions as 'We are IT. See us grow.' In the hotel where we stayed at Regina a Winnipeg 'drummer'—commercial traveller—and another drummer were talking. 'Have you been to Winnipeg lately?' asked the Winnipeg man. 'Yes, I was there last Tuesday week. It is a fine growing city.' 'Tuesday week? But you should see it now!'

Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan, we found a town of 60,000 population, with a two million dollar hotel, a very fine college and a State Parliament House that was an architectural ornament. Thirty years before the site was occupied by a single shack, where now stands the house of the Governor of the Province. A turkey and cranberry supper was given in our honour. The Mayor, Mr. M'Ara, came along to welcome us. He told us of the growth of the city and how an early Mayor welcomed to Regina the first religious Convention ever held in the Province, the Presbyterian Synod. That Mayor was much more at home with 'the boys' on a horse, or playing poker, than in a religious gathering, but he did his best.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I give you the most cordial welcome to our city. I hope the result of your deliberations will be everything that you desire. Myself and my fellow townsmen want you thoroughly to enjoy yourselves while you are with us, and so that there may be no restraint on your enjoyment I have just given orders to lock up the entire police force for the duration of the Convention.'

Calgary, on the Bow river, and with the serrated line of the Rocky Mountains standing out in the transparent atmosphere, we greatly liked. Our host, son-in-law of our friend Mr. T. B. Macaulay, of Montreal, President of the Sun Life Assurance Company, told us that with the temperature far below zero, the brilliant sun in a fleckless blue sky, and the still air, made it possible to play tennis on the snow on Christmas Day.

The eight hundred miles' run over the Rockies, and down through British Columbia, was a continual delight. The mildness and the brightness of the weather continued, and we enjoyed the glorious panorama of the Canadian Switzerland, standing or sitting on the platform of the observation car. I spent the dark hours before bedtime with the 'drummers' in a smoking-car, listening to their talk of business, and putting questions to draw out information. They were unanimous that British business firms lost much business because they did not study Canadian conditions. The Americans and Germans sent enterprising experts to study new towns and territories that were being opened up by the railways. First essentials were to find out what the people wanted, and to meet their needs in regard to payment. English firms as a rule stood out for the short credit terms usual in dealing with well-established countries. The Americans and Germans got their feet in by offering long credit, and if necessary instalment payments spread over three or four years. I had heard the same story at Hamilton. The manager of the branch of the McCormick firm, the greatest American producers of agricultural power machinery, told me that his firm had five million dollars' worth of

goods in the Prairie Provinces, on payments spread over five years. Farmers breaking fresh land need every dollar of capital for clearing, draining and fencing the land. It will be three years before the land begins to return much, and then the return will be cumulative. 'We regard that five million dollars' long credit,' said the manager, 'as capital investment. We know we shall get our money back, and then the farmers will want more and more of our goods. They are sure to come to us.'

Vancouver city—we had not time to visit the island—was another marvel, with shop streets such as those of the London West End. The city took the place of the original capital, New Westminster, which failed like Peter Pan to grow up. In the reserved Stanley Park we saw the giant cedars and firs, survivals of an extinct race. On the Sunday morning I took the pulpit at a Presbyterian Church. At the close came up to me one of the 'drummers' of the run down to the coast. He was laughing, and said, 'Who the devil would have thought of seeing you in a pulpit? We thought you were one of us.' He admitted that he had liked the sermon, and was glad he had come.

Among my Vancouver cicerones was a Methodist minister who went into the country as assistant to the Methodist pioneer, before British Columbia became a State. He told me how his chief, in those early days, found the ground heart-breakingly hard from the evangelist's point of view. He 'padded it' to the widely separated lumber camps, but the Roman Catholic 'Sky Pilot' was always before him and somehow got hold of 'the boys.' One night, as dusk was deepening, the Method-



ist, on foot, was joined by the Father, on horseback. The Father slowed to a walking pace, and they went on together. They came to a rough shack hotel. The Father said, 'Brother, there's nothing else. We must sleep here. It is very lonely. I forgot to bring my cards. Have you a pack?' The Methodist said, 'Yes, I never travel without them.' In the lumber camps, be it said, life after the day's work was so depressingly lonely that cards were about the only escape. The next morning, when the two left the hotel, the Methodist rode on the sleek horse with sixty dollars in his pocket, and the Father walked with ten dollars lent him by the Methodist. The story went the round of the camps, the Methodist was received everywhere with a roaring welcome, 'and that was the beginning of the Methodist capture of British Columbia.' I am not in a position to vouch for the authenticity of this 'new chapter in the Acts of the Apostles.' 'I tell the tale as 'twas told to me.'

The land speculation fever was at its climax while I was in Canada. On the Sunday before I left England I was speaking in St. Andrews Hall, Glasgow, along with my old friend Will Crooks, who had just returned from Canada. 'Jeffs,' he said, 'if you meet a land agent, get into the next street as soon as possible.' But I found the agent was in the next street waiting for me. He was on the trains and in the hotels with his map of tempting 'Lots' in new towns, or suburbs destined to become within three years prosperous resorts. Five dollars per foot frontage now would give you a lot, or lots, that would be worth fifty dollars per foot frontage within three years. You paid on the instalment principle. If you didn't want to

hold the lots you could sell at double or treble the price before the next instalment fell due. Ordinary profits or wages seemed not worth while with such 'snips' going. All the talk was of men who had given up ten or fifteen dollars a week jobs to become real-estate agents and in a couple of years had made a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Sometimes I was tempted by maps showing marvellous 'snips' in 'acreage'—or agricultural land. Towards the end, I confided to an agent at Toronto that I was not speculating. He opened his heart to me on the secrets of the trade. 'A man comes to me,' he said, 'and wants to buy, say, fifty lots. I show him a map of the estate that has been marked out for sale. The suburb on this side of it, five years ago, was uncleared land. Now a street car line runs to it, and a railway station is to be built. The new site is only seven minutes' run from the City Hall. Would the client like to be run to see it? He would. I send for my car. We talk all the way about the "snips." We are really there in seven minutes, but mine is a mighty fast car! It is seven miles from the City Hall. More likely than not he snaps up the "snips." If he finds things are not what they seemed, he passes them on to somebody else. It's the last fool who gets the pinch.'

I heard of a minister at a country town church in Manitoba who began by denouncing land speculation as a sinful gamble. Gradually he was fired by what he heard. He resigned his charge, took to land speculation and in two years made a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Conscience then began to prick him. He cleaned his

hands of the accursed thing for ever, took a fresh charge, and again he denounced the gambling.

Shortly after my return the bubble burst. English friends of my own, tempted by agents who had come over, speculated in lots. A provincial Mayor told me he had sent £500 to a certain agent in Saskatchewan. He could get no reply as to the lots bought. I made enquiries and found that agent had sought a more congenial climate in California, and that others had disappeared.

A word about the Canadian Press. There are very good papers in the Eastern Provinces and in Manitoba. Winnipeg, in its *Free Press*, produces a Saturday edition of something like half-a-hundred large pages. It must pay, but I don't understand how it's done. A *Free Press* man came to report me at the Methodist College. At the close he came to me to explain apologetically that he was a Frenchman who had only been in the country six weeks. He was only just learning English and he had only been able to pick out a sentence or two of my speech. He was effusively grateful when I dictated a half-column to him in French. I did not see the next day's paper, so I do not know what sort of English he made of it.

At Regina, after my meeting, two reporters came in succession to my hotel. They should have been at the meeting, but a Bulgarian had murdered a Serbian in the Dago section. Would I dictate something to them? I did.

As in the States, every Canadian townlet has its paper. I was told in Winnipeg how, ten years before, a printer in a very small way, when the railway was to open up a three hundred miles' valley, studied the map, fixed on

what he thought was a strategic position, loaded his press and type on a cart and trekked two hundred miles to the site of the town he saw in his mind's eye. The town had sure enough been started, had grown to six thousand population and the prophetic printer was proprietor-editor of a daily and had been three times Mayor.

It is the ability of a Canadian to change his occupation if he thinks he can better himself that gives him a pull over the English emigrant, especially if the emigrant is past his first youth. I met men who had started, say, as baker, and had been in turn guard of a goods train, painter, hotel commissionaire, compositor, land agent, before settling down to farming, building or insurance agency, in which they had 'struck oil.' British trade unionism, with whatever advantages, helps machinery to destroy the initiative of the worker. As a secretary of a branch of a railwaymen's union told me, 'A man is in a certain grade. He would like to get into a superior grade. But each grade is a watertight compartment. It has its own sectional union. The superior grade union will not allow men to enter from an inferior grade. The consequence is that a man is simply imprisoned in the grade in which he happens to find himself.' During the War, I travelled Northward with several soldiers on leave in the compartment. The talk turned to trade unionism. One man had come from the United States. 'Do you belong to a union?' he was asked. 'No, thank you,' he said. 'I belonged to a union before I went out. I found I could never get any further in my trade. In the States I had a free hand. I tried three or four trades, and when I left to join up I was earning seven times as much as I could

ever have made in England.' At Vancouver I was told of a married daughter who had sent for her widowed father to join her. He had been an engine cleaner on the Great Western Railway. His one idea of work was cleaning engines in the G.W.R. way. Canadian engines on the great trunk lines were different from G.W.R. engines, and cleaning methods were altogether different. The man found himself helpless, and seemed paralysed for any other kind of work. It is that inability to land on their feet in new conditions that makes emigration so disappointing to thousands of men brought up in rigid trade unionism. Highly paid rough work goes to Slavs and men of other races who are willing and able to take such jobs as are going.

Regard has always to be had to the illimitable spaces, the small and scattered populations spread over States twice or thrice the size of England and Wales, the infusion of large foreign elements, the lack of historical background, the hand-to-hand fight with natural conditions, in comparing Canadian political methods and morals with our own. Political leadership is drawn from a very limited class, and the honours and rewards are none too attractive. If, now and again, a Minister has been discovered to be feathering his own nest it is not surprising. On the whole I came to the conclusion that Dominion and State government is much better than might be expected. Canadians are much keener on the maintenance of law and order than are their neighbours across the border. As an American settler in Saskatchewan put it to me: 'I like Canada because you know where you are. In my State, now, a law will be passed saying that if a

man does a certain thing he will be hanged. A man does that thing, and as likely as not they make him Mayor of the town. They pass a similar law in Canada. A man does that thing and I'll be hanged if he isn't hanged. That's much more satisfactory. In our town the church people got up an agitation against betting on the race course. A law was passed prohibiting betting. With my own eyes I saw, a year after, the Mayor and the Chief Constable going up and down on the Grand Stand booking bets.'

That reminds me of an interview I had with Mr. Tennyson Smith, an English pioneer of Prohibition, on his return from a visit to America some thirty years ago. He went to study the working of Prohibition in the 'dry' States, expecting to gather much valuable material to use in his campaign. He came home sadly disillusioned. There were 'Blind Tigers,' illicit drinking places, in every town of a 'dry State.' He took with him a pet dog. In one town he found long posters with a series of regulations threatening with the most fearful pains and penalties any who did not keep dogs under control. There must be a collar with the owner's name, a chain, a muzzle. Mr. Smith, terror-stricken, hunted the town over to find a Store where he could buy the collar, chain and muzzle. They were nowhere to be had. 'What do you want these things for, anyway?' asked a woman at about the twelfth Store. 'To comply with your municipal regulations about dogs.' She burst out laughing. 'Don't you worry,' she said. 'A few people raised a scare about mad dogs. They made a great noise, and our Council made the regulations to shut their mouths.' Mr. Smith told me that the ideal would be American laws and English administration, but he would

rather have worse laws put into force than better laws that everybody ignored.

When British Columbia attained State dignity, I was told, well-meaning people said, 'Let us keep out the political party system. We will elect just the best men to pass the best laws, and avoid the bitterness and strife that go with the party system.' It sounded idyllic, but in practice it meant that nobody took any interest in elections. The candidates were not the 'best men,' but the least scrupulous 'grafters,' who played into each other's hands. There was hopeless inefficiency and scandalous corruption. The party system had to be called in to purify and save British Columbia from the clutches of the 'grafters.'

We returned on the *Royal Edward* from Halifax, as the St. Lawrence was closed for the winter. It was a stormy passage, and I was one of a dozen saloon passengers, out of a hundred and twenty, who rallied without fail to meals. The passengers were nearly all English Canadians going home for Christmas. They had got so accustomed to the swift melting of 10, 20, and 50 dollar notes—we soon discovered that—that they said, 'It made them feel real mean to spend only sixpence on a cigar or a Bass. Nothing less than a quarter counts in Canada.' One of them told a story of two millionaires in Toronto's best hotel. One, changing a five-dollar note to pay for a cigar, dropped a 'quarter.' The other called his attention to it. 'Do you think,' scathingly asked the first millionaire, 'that I should have become the man I am if I had wasted time in picking up quarters?' 'Perhaps not,' said the second millionaire, 'but I should never have become the man I am if I had not picked up every quarter I could lay my hands on.'

A source of continual interest was a young middle-aged factor of a fur-collecting station on Hudson Bay. He had not been home for fifteen years. His post was six hundred miles from Winnipeg, the nearest railway station. His nearest neighbour, also a factor, was a hundred miles away, but that was next door on Hudson Bay. The last time he had travelled from Winnipeg, with a train of dog-drawn sledges, there were blizzards, and four days from the Bay provisions ran out for men and dogs. Fleet-footed Indians were sent on for supplies, and they returned just in time to save the party from perishing. I had many chats with my factor friend. He and his wife and his fellow factor and wife visited each other, played cards and other games and turned on their gramophone records. Only once a year did a steamer reach their stations, with necessaries, and above all their ‘mail,’ including a full year’s supply of a daily paper. ‘We are not so much shut off from the world as you might think,’ he said. ‘We each have our daily paper every day. We each take from our pile the paper for the corresponding day of last year, and we religiously refrain from opening the next day’s paper till the next day.’

He told us many stories, which we recognized as dating from the music-halls and musical comedies fifteen years before. He took in good part our joke that he and his friends kept their good stories in cold storage, and thawed them out as wanted.

He told me that on his last home leave the cinema was a new thing. On his first visit to ‘The Pictures’ there was a film of a cavalry charge. When he saw the horses charging towards him—he was in a front seat—he jumped up,



climbed over the back of the seat, and bolted down the theatre 'before I remembered what a fool I was.' While we were in Winnipeg there was a case of an Indian girl summoned and paternally admonished for disturbing a 'Movies' performance. She had gone in with her lover. There was a film of an Indian war dance. It was so realistic that the girl emitted fearful war whoops, and could not be quieted till her lover and others got her out.

My factor friend was taking home five thousand pounds' worth of valuable furs in a quite small case. It was a luxury of sympathetic emotion to watch the meeting and greetings with his father, a grizzled Colonel, on board at Avonmouth.

## CHAPTER XII

### AT SOME HISTORIC BEGINNINGS

*Velocipede to Motor Car—Telephone to Radio—Hand-work to Machine Production—Entrée of the Gramophone—The Diamond Jubilee and Imperialism—Women's Franchise Pioneers—First L.C.C. Meeting—'G.K.C.' on 'For Putney'—First Day of the War—Adventures of Race Home through France—Paris in August, 1915—Paris in Armistice Week—The War Front—Rheims, The 'Madness that would Rebuild Rheims'—Soissons—The Dean and his Housekeeper—St. Quentin and Biscuits that Choked—Noyon—At the Wreckage of Calvin's Birthplace—Château Thierry—Our Catholic and Royalist Count Cicerone—Armistice Sunday at the Temple de L'Oratoire—Historic Day for the Huguenots*

MEMORY goes back to many epoch-making beginnings since the mid-'seventies. An epochal beginning is usually also the ending of an age. That unknown genius who invented the wheel excavated a deep and wide gulf between primeval barbarism and incoming civilization. I wonder what he would have thought of the velocipede, which came in when I was a boy. It was the 'bone-shaker,' with its six-foot front wheel, and tiny back wheel, and no rubber tyres. The velocipede was the salvation of Coventry. At that time the city of Lady Godiva and the Three Spires was brought very low. Its once flourishing silk trade was at its last gasp, reduced to the manufacture of book-markers. Nobody foresaw the invention of arti-

ficial silk, so tempting to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Then the watch-trade, once a flourishing Coventry industry, was also nearing its end, crushed out by 'Waterbury' machine mass production. Coventry found salvation in the velocipede and the future cycle and motor car, to which it led. A Coventry man, Mr. Starley, invented the bicycle as we know it, and Mr. J. B. Dunlop the pneumatic tyre, and the ancient repose of Coventry gave place to the hum of thriving industry. The motor car, the 'motor bike' and the aeroplane in recent years became Coventry's specialities.

The telephone came in when I was at Wolverhampton. We were connected with the associated Birmingham evening paper. Truth to tell, I have always cherished a dislike of the telephone. In the swing of doing a leader, a review or a 'special,' the 'phone broke in and a sentence was chopped in the middle and the flow of inspiration switched off. The 'phone has speeded life up too much for my taste. A business friend, in whose office I happened to be, was rung up from Liverpool, and did a profitable deal in a two minutes' talk. He was ecstatic over the wonderful way in which the 'phone expedites business. Perhaps so, but it has helped business to get on the top of life, and that accounts for much 'moral and intellectual damage' to the age. Some day, I suppose, we shall be in the 'advanced' stage of the United States and Canada where there is a 'phone in most bedrooms, and you may be called up in your beauty sleep over some matter of business or social arrangements for the morrow. Dr. Garvie tells how, landing at Montreal, he was called up at two in the morning by a newspaper which told him it

wanted an interview on 'What do you think of Canada?' 'I don't think anything of Canada,' he said. 'I have only just arrived. I am going to sleep. Good morning!' The 'phone has led to the wireless and for that I partly forgive it. One need not listen to the wireless unless he wants to. In my country home I do my concert-going by wireless.

While I was in the Black Country the ousting of hand labour by machine-production was making rapid advances. For centuries hand-making of nails and chains at home forges at which, from time immemorial, the whole family worked, had been carried on. I often saw such work being done as I tramped to engagements from Dudley. At Wolverhampton in 1884 there was an industrial exhibition. Among the exhibits was a nail-making machine. The nails dropped complete at the rate of two or three a second. The hand-workers had an agonizing time of starvation on fourteen to sixteen hours a day, but of course the machines won. Recently a business man told me how he had seen at Birmingham a machine for making almost invisible screws for watches. The screws were turned out at an almost incredible rate, and at no stage were they touched by hand. The boot and other trades have undergone the same transformation, after the usual period of agonizing hand competition. Much of the industrial trouble is due to the displacement of hand labour and the failing to provide for the hand-workers who find their occupation gone. There is a grave moral side to it also. Men who did hand-work were artists in their way. They were proud of good work done. They had time to think and maintained their individuality.

Now, as a man in the boot trade said to me, 'instead of making complete pairs of boots the man tends a machine that shapes a strip of leather for part of a sole or an upper. It deadens his intellect, and when his day's work is done, he flies to any excitement in the way of amusement that may be going.'

Shortly after coming to London I was one of a Press party at the Crystal Palace to hear the newly invented phonograph. Colonel Gouraud, Edison's agent, had provided a singer or two and a lady whistler to make 'records' which when made were turned on for us. Some of us, myself included, were invited to talk into the machine and afterwards heard our own voices. I did not recognize mine in the gruff tones given out by the record. Now we have the gramophone giving out Paderewski playing Chopin and Schubert, songs by the world's most glorious voices, Beethoven Symphonies by the finest orchestras—and also much cheap and nasty musical rubbish.

As member of a Press party also I went down to the Embankment one day to see the first really practical motor car. It was of the landau type. We were given trial runs from the Temple to Westminster Abbey and back, and thought it a weird fulfilment of the prophecy 'Carriages without horses shall go.' Later, when Parliament repealed the Act limiting the speed of locomotive vehicles on the road to four miles an hour, with a man carrying a red flag in front, I saw the celebration of 'The Day' by the starting of sixty motor cars to Brighton. Only about five-and-twenty arrived, but in their success was the promise and potency of the Motor Show of 1932

with its sales to the value of millions of pounds, and of the motor-car races, with their track speeds running up to 150 miles an hour. The motor car, with the cycle, has created the rubber industry, that has brought scores of thousands of miles of tropical country under cultivation.

Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887 was the beginning of modern Imperialism. I was at the opening of the Imperial Institute, which was expected to become a great display and rendezvous of Empire. The Institute never 'caught on,' but Imperialism did, helped by Kipling's stirring poetry. For a time the Institute gardens were a favourite pleasure resort. I remember a glorious summer evening, a full moon in a clear sky, the Gardens twinkling with lights, the Viennese Waltz Orchestra conducted by Edward Strauss, and *The Blue Danube* and other creations of the Strauss family played as none but a Viennese band with a Strauss wielding the bâton could play them. The Institute has long been given over to the University of London. The Dominions prefer their own displays of what they can do in their own buildings, in the midst of the streams of London life.

For *The Christian World*, in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties, I went to several Women's Franchise meetings in West End drawing-rooms. The gatherings were small but very select. To the Press and nine hundred and ninety-nine people out of a hundred Woman's Suffrage was just a fad, a subject for academic discussion, as the Dark Lady of the Shakespeare Sonnets or the authorship of the *Letters of Junius*. Even women were not interested. The prophetesses of Women's Suffrage at the time were

Miss Lydia Becker and Mrs. Henry Fawcett. Their arguments from the constitutional and women's intelligence points of view were irresistible, but conservative traditions and sentiment were against them. All the while, however, they were sowing the seed. Feminist movements were springing up abroad, and sex political consciousness was developing. The early years of the twentieth century saw the rise of the Woman's Suffrage militant. I was present at the Liberal meeting in the Queen's Hall when, the Unionist Government having resigned, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman's Government was serving as stop-gap before the 1906 General Election. It was then that the militants unmasked their guns and opened their campaign. Banners were flung over the fronts of galleries and boxes, and speakers were continually interrupted. From obstruction at meetings the suffragists advanced to audacious acts of wilful destruction of property, and one of them 'obstructed' from the gallery of the House of Commons, and when the attendants went to remove her they found that she had chained herself to the front of the gallery. It happened that at the week-end, having a speaking engagement in the North, I was guest of a gracious lady in a beautiful country house. She seemed much too refined and gentle to have any sympathy with militancy, but my eyes were opened to the growth of the Suffrage movement when, discussing the House of Commons incident, she said, 'I could not have done such a thing myself, but I could hug her for doing it.' The War came and the Suffragists 'made their calling and election sure, by the magnificent national service they did, in common with the whole body of British women. They converted

their most powerful opponent, Mr. Asquith, who confessed that women had earned their right to the vote. Lady Astor entered the House of Commons, other women followed her, a woman has been member of a Government and the stout old British Constitution has been strengthened rather than shattered.

I was present at the first meeting of the London County Council. Lord Rosebery was in the chair. The Council replaced the Metropolitan Board of Works, which rightly or wrongly was looked on as the symbol of administrative inefficiency and shameless axe-grinding. London reformers saw in the L.C.C. the promise of a Metropolitan New Jerusalem. A number of Socialists were elected and they were going to turn a London that was right side down right side up. A Socialist member published a volume of poems on the London that was to be. Very soon a change came o'er the spirit of the scene. Faced with the actual problems to be solved, the Socialists and other rosy-visions optimists sobered down. Lord Rosebery, I fancy, enjoyed his L.C.C. Chairmanship much more than he did his Premiership. He did not then think Socialism was 'the end of all things.' John Burns, from a Trafalgar Square incendiary, was converted into a cautious practical statesman. The L.C.C. earned the gratitude of London, but it is doubtful if it got it. The incurable weakness of London municipal administration is that so few Londoners take any interest in the municipal bodies. London is a heterogeneous conglomeration of Boroughs that have little in common with each other. People earn their living in the centre, and use the outer Boroughs as dormitories. There is little of the local patriotism of the country towns,



and in the Boroughs themselves neighbours do not know neighbours. Candidates are usually strangers, and are looked on as just vote-snatchers. Well-organized 'interests' have a big pull on the mere propagators of principles. G. K. Chesterton hit off the position in a *Christian World* article—the versatile 'G. K. C.' once contributed regularly and brilliantly to the paper, and cashed his cheque which he received weekly before leaving the office—'It worried him to remember who owed him money.' While a colleague got the cheque, he sketched caricatures on a blotting pad. Sometimes he came back to ask if he had left a parcel of missing MS. on the table. Somebody wrote a volume of poetry, *For England*. 'Why,' asked G. K. C., 'does not somebody write a volume of poetry *For Putney*? After all, Putney means more to most of us than England. In Putney are our homes, and Putney is the centre of all our dearest interests.' But Putney, and Tooting, and Paddington still await their poets who shall 'weave the Borough's legends into rhyme.' The musicians have begun to discover London, and 'listeners in' are regaled with a London Symphony and tone poems expressing the inspirations given by various phases of the multiform life of London. The new type of Socialist, less idealistic and more cantankerous, has set out to capture the L.C.C. as well as the Boroughs. Let us hope that experience in actual government will continue to sift the wheat from the Socialist chaff.

#### FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT WAR

A beginning that is burnt into my memory is that of the Great War. On July 31, 1914, I left London with a

party including Sir Willoughby Dickinson and Mr. J. Allen Baker, M.P., for a World Peace Conference of the Churches at Constance. We were already in the shadow of the most catastrophic storm that has ever afflicted the world. We took dinner in the train after leaving Boulogne—the last dinner to be served in the restaurant cars for nearly five years. We discussed the possibilities. Mr. Allen Baker was a Quaker. I asked him what would happen to a pugnacious Quaker if somebody tested his pacifism by hitting him hard on the right cheek. Mr. Baker told a story of an American Quaker who was tackled on the question, and a big blustering fellow actually punched him on the right cheek. The Quaker meekly turned the other cheek, and received another punch. ‘There,’ he said, taking off his coat, ‘the Bible injunction ends. It is left to our own judgment what we do afterwards.’ He went for the bully, and very soon ‘wiped the floor with him.’

An attendant came in to tell us that the Kaiser had given the order for ‘State of War.’ At four in the morning we were turned out at the little frontier station of Petit Croix. We were told that the Germans had cut the line on their side, and seized three engines of the East of France railway, that the passengers were sitting by their flung-out luggage and that German Customs House guards had fired at French guards across the frontier. There was a run on the scanty refreshments at the Petit Croix restaurant. A consultation was held. Most of our party decided to try to get through Switzerland to Constance. As a journalist, I thought it my duty to get back to the paper. If mobilization took place, it might be three weeks or a fortnight

before I could get home. A Lancashire Vicar decided to return with me. The whole train service was disorganized. Conscripts packed trains bound for Belfort and other rallying centres. They wore their working clothes, and carried food in cloths and handkerchiefs. Some were on the tops of the carriages, or packed in goods trucks and guards' vans. Everywhere the strains of the *Marseillaise* were heard. The Vicar and I found a train bound for Belfort, but there was endless shunting, and it was hours before we reached Belfort. We were fortunate there in picking up a train about eleven o'clock from Bâle to Paris. We rejoiced to find restaurant cars on it, and being ravenously hungry we booked seats for midday luncheon. When the hour arrived, we made our way to the cars, but found to our dismay that they had been taken off and the attendants called out for mobilization. A benevolent-looking priest got in at a station. He told us of the assassination in Paris of Jean Jaurès, the Socialist leader. The country, he said, had been swept of workers of military age and horses, and none were left but old men, women and children. We had already seen men busily uprooting fields of cabbages and other crops. 'If the Boches swept over the land they should not have the crops.' Being told of our hunger and the restaurant car incident, the priest said his parish was at a big junction town about an hour further on, and he would try to get us something at the station restaurant. We each gave him three francs. When we reached the junction the priest had to cross five or six lines and hurry up a very long platform to the restaurant right at the end. We watched him anxiously, fearing that the train would start before he got back.

He appeared, waved two big packages and two bottles, sprinted down the platform and across the rails and thrust the treasures into our hands just as the train was on the move. We thanked our Roman Catholic Good Samaritan and thrust francs into his hand for his poor. We found each package contained two enormous roll sandwiches, and the bottles were good *vin ordinaire*. The Vicar had thoughtfully provided himself with a corkscrew and a collapsible cup. No Alderman at the Guildhall ever got half the enjoyment out of a banquet as we did out of our simple fare, and Protestant though I am I have had kinder thoughts of the priesthood of the Roman Church ever since.

Ticket collectors as well as restaurant car attendants had been called out. One could have travelled anywhere in France that day without a ticket. We reached Paris at seven o'clock. Troops were being packed into trains and despatched to the frontier with lightning speed. We found a near-by restaurant and got a good dinner. Afterwards we hailed a taxi to take us to the Gare du Nord for the nine o'clock train. We had an illustration of what war meant even in the taxi. The 'cocher' was very subdued. His wife sat in the car suckling her baby. Outside the Nord was an immense crowd of English, Americans and Frenchmen living in England, who had been spending their vacations in France, hurrying home. Germany had declared war with Russia, and the German Ambassador in Paris, in an interview with the Premier, M. Viviani, had left no doubt that France was to be immediately attacked. In the crowd I met my friend Mr. Arthur Spurgeon—now Sir Arthur—and his wife. We had a frightful time

getting into the station. That journey to Calais is a nightmare, six or seven standing in every compartment, and the corridors packed as closely as men and women could stand. It was a sultry night, and all were parched with thirst. An American with a bottle of mineral water passed it round for everybody to have a sip. An American honeymoon couple told how all gold and silver had immediately disappeared. No change was obtainable for notes. Bank drafts became for the time valueless. They had deposited their luggage in the morning in the station baggage room, but on going to take it out they found mountains of baggage, and all the attendants had been called out. They had no night attire, no outer wraps. A little handbag was all that the bride had with her. A young married Frenchman, clerk at Richmond, told me he was hurrying home to make arrangements for his wife and child before returning for mobilization. 'Will England come in?' he anxiously asked. 'If she does not France is done, but not before she has made the enemy suffer terrible losses.' He believed, as most Frenchmen did at the time, that the Germans would strike through the 'Gap of Belfort.' He had seen the fortifications round Belfort and Verdun, and said that it would cost the Germans a million in killed and wounded to cut their way through. As it happened, the Germans knew that very well, and they preferred to strike through Belgium. That by no means saved the million men, for it forced England into the field, and my French friend soon got his answer.

We reached Calais at two in the morning. The boat was almost to the water's edge with the overload of

passengers. When the Vicar and I were able to get into the refreshment saloon we shared a bottle of claret and two syphons of mineral water. Reckless of consequences, we drank and drank till our throats and lips were moist again. I reached home at eight on Sunday morning to the great relief of my family, who had pictured me a prisoner in German hands.

I was in France again on the first anniversary of the War, in Armistice week, and in the week of the signature of the Treaty of Versailles. As a Brotherhood Movement leader I had, with Mr. William Ward, promoted a relief fund for the distribution in Lille and other towns and for French and Belgian refugees from the war area, and later I founded the British Churches' Auxiliary of the French Protestant Churches' fund to resettle their homeless families. Dean Inge was president of the Auxiliary and Sir Murray Hyslop chairman. That August visit of 1915 was a tragic revelation of the frightful losses of France, which those who knew dare not reveal to the nation. Almost every woman was in mourning. The darkened streets at night, and the closed cafés on the Grands Boulevards reminded one of a plague-stricken city of the Middle Ages. A delegation of my Auxiliary was to have started for France on the very first day of the Armistice. It had to be deferred for two days. On the evening of November 13th we found Paris a blaze of light. The Parisians were revelling in the dazzling splendour after the four years of darkened streets. The previous night M. Clemenceau, the Premier, 'The Tiger,' had ascended to the roof of one of the great Magazins to feast his eyes on the rainbow brilliance.

With three members of my delegation, and French Church leaders, I visited a large part of the French war front, including St. Quentin, Rheims, Soissons, Noyon and Château Thierry. With the exception of St. Quentin, only about two-thirds shattered, the cities and scores of large hamlets and villages were heaps of ruins. Not a habitable house was left in Rheims, where there had been a prosperous population of about 125,000. A few of the city Councillors had returned to see what could be done. Three lady heroines of the bombardment—Madame Krug, wife of a leading champagne merchant, Madame Gonin, wife of the Protestant Pastor, and a school-mistress—had returned and started a very modest kitchen in the basement of a ruined school to meet the needs of the Councillors and the 48-hours' Permissionnaires—Rheims poilus come to see what was left of their homes. We were guests of the ladies. The meal was a most affecting 'love feast.' On the visit to Rheims in Peace signature week we saw touching attempts at restarting life among the ruins—stalls with picture postcards, trinkets and other trifles, in streets that had rivalled the finest in Europe. At luncheon given in our honour by Madame Krug I sat next to a lady who had been in charge of the Civil Hospital during the bombardment. She told me how they got used to it after a time. The Germans systematically destroyed the city section by section. The lady, on hours off in the evening, would go out hatless, 'singing through the streets as if they were country lanes.' She told me such a story as I had never heard or read of local patriotism. A Rheims man, desperately wounded, was sent to a convalescent hospital

on the Riviera. In that earthly paradise, with the blues of the sky and the sea meeting, amid the sunshine and the flowers, it might be supposed that he was happy enough. But no! His heart was in Rheims. He begged to be sent to Rheims. 'No,' he was told, 'you cannot go. There are no houses, no work, no anything.' 'But I must go to Rheims,' he reiterated. 'I must go to Rheims, or I shall die.' He received an allowance of 36 sous a day. Most of his money, in his working days, had gone on wine. He gave up drinking wine, he husbanded his 36 sous like a miser, he saved eighteen francs, the price of a single ticket to Rheims, 'and,' said the lady, 'he is now in my hospital, starved to a skeleton, but gloriously happy, for he is in Rheims. People may say he is mad, but it is madness of that sort that will rebuild Rheims.'

One of my lasting satisfactions will be that our Auxiliary was enabled to place in the rebuilt Protestant Temple at Rheims a beautiful Communion Table tablet memorial of the British soldiers who fell in the Rheims district.

At Soissons we found as Permissionnaires the Dean of the Cathedral and his old housekeeper. The lady sat on a broken stone of the smashed-up Cathedral with two long loaves and a bottle of wine. The Dean had found his house and everything else reduced to rubble. Besides ourselves there were not a dozen people in Soissons that Armistice Saturday morning—a city of 60,000. The Dean had the French sense of humour. Three or four Americans had been among the ruins. One had said, 'M. Dean, how much will it cost to build you a new Cathedral?' He suggested that a million dollars at least would be needed.



'We'll hustle round to get it when we reach home,' one of them said. 'I am not hopeful of seeing the money,' he said smilingly. 'When are you going back to Normandy?' I asked him. 'To-morrow.' 'But where shall you sleep to-night?' 'Oh, I expect we shall find a cellar we can creep into, somewhere.'

At St. Quentin the Mayor had provided coffee and biscuits for us. The Germans had imprisoned him for protesting against their high-handed treatment of the people. He was bowed with sorrow and the burden of his responsibility. Three parts of his house was destroyed and he was a ruined man. The cups and saucers and plates were of various patterns, few unchipped. They had been rescued from among ruins. We were almost too choked with emotion to eat the biscuits.

At Noyon we stood in front of the pile of broken bricks and tiles that had been the birthplace of John Calvin, whose lawyer father was the Cathedral's business man. The Cathedral was shattered to hopeless ruin. Calvin is the hero of the French Churches of Huguenot extraction. Noyon was their Mecca. I picked as souvenirs two fragments of brick from Calvin's house. M. Cornélis de Witt—he has since died—was then the lay leader of French Protestantism. Looking at the rubble heap he said, 'You may say we Frenchmen ought to forgive the Germans and love them. Well, we will try to do so, but it will be very hard.'

A closing word about our friend and cicerone during the Armistice week visits to the War front. He was a Count, beyond military age, a very wealthy man, owner of famous racehorses, some of which he had lent during

the War to his friend King Alfonso. He had been a friend also of King Edward VII. He was a Catholic and a Royalist, but a fervid patriot. He had placed himself at the disposal of the Foreign Office, which deputed to him the conduct of distinguished Allies to the War fronts. We were honoured by being included in the category, and French army motor cars and chauffeurs were granted for our transport. The Count showed inexhaustible resource alike in the commissariat department and in bridging war-made gaps in the railway facilities. We would leave Paris by train about six in the morning. A manservant would appear bowed beneath the weight of hampers with food and drinks. Only cutlery was short. We had to carve cold boiled and roast chickens and meat pasties with whatever cutting instruments we possessed. Royalist, turfman and Roman Catholic, he was a jolly good fellow to our delegation of Protestant and Puritan democrats, and our hearts have never ceased to go out to him. We are not likely to forget our Saturday evening dinner in a patched-up hotel at Château Thierry. There were American officers strumming banjos and singing with light hearts. The hostess had shown French womanly resource in getting together a dinner, concluding with a soft cheese that sent an Oxford Professor into raptures. One of our party, the Vicar of Balham, was not with us. His car—the last, and he the only passenger—had broken down ten miles away on the bank of the Marne. The Count insisted that we must take the train to Paris. The Vicar turned up at the Paris hotel at breakfast time, very wrathful. I invited him to repeat in Welsh—for he is a Welshman—what he said on reaching Château Thierry.

He declined. He had camped on the station platform till four in the morning and then stood in a packed troop train all the way to Paris. Later when I sent to the two local papers an article on 'Moonlight on the Marne: The Vicar of Balham's Adventure,' he forgave us for leaving him in the lurch.

On the first Sunday following the Armistice there was held, in honour of our Delegation, a service in the Temple de L'Oratoire, the monastic church that had been conceded to the Protestants by Napoleon I. It is the Metropolitan Cathedral of French Protestantism. That service will be remembered by the descendants of the Huguenots as one of the great days of Huguenot history: it was the first official recognition of their community by the Chief of the State. I had brought messages from the Archbishop of York (now Archbishop of Canterbury), the Moderators of the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Dean of St. Paul's and the President of the National Free Church Council, while my wife was entrusted with a Message to the Women of France from Mrs. Lloyd George. M. Poincaré, President of the Republic, sent as his representative his chief Equerry, a Colonel resplendent in his uniform, medals and ribbons. My wife was almost overcome when he bowed deeply to her and took his seat by her side. The Messages were read and welcomed with wild enthusiasm, and speeches followed from great lights of the French pulpit and members of the Delegation. Through the Press the Messages were broadcast throughout France, and stirred to the depths the emotion of the warm-hearted people in

whose memory was fresh the four years' heroic and sacrificial comradeship of their own 'Poilus' and the British 'Tommies.' It was only at the eleven o'clock hour on the previous Monday that the 'Cease Fire' had proclaimed the Great Peace.

## CHAPTER XIII

### OLD LAMPS AND NEW IN FLEET STREET

*When Fleet Street was Bohemian—From 'Wet' to 'Dry'  
—Saints in Fleet Street—'Casar's Households'—'The  
Finest Quotation'—Marie Corelli's Feuds—W. T. Stead*

WITH more or less modesty Fleet Street has been called 'The Street of Adventure,' 'The Grey Matter of the World's Brain' and other fancy names. Between Chancery Lane and Ludgate Circus—in Fleet Street and its purlieus to north and south—is the greatest newspaper land in the world. Hundreds of papers, dailies and weeklies, serious and humorous, secular and religious, have their offices and printing works within this Newspaper Land. The weekly output must tot up to hundreds of millions of copies. Day and night the printing presses, capable, like the modern Hoe machine, of turning out their 25,000 an hour each, are eating up their five-mile drums of wood pulp paper. The machines not only print, but cut, fold and turn out the papers in dozens or couple of dozens as required. *The Daily Chronicle* and *The Christian World* introduced them at the same time. 'The 'greatest circulations' will run a dozen or a score of those machines at once, this being made possible by the stereotyping of the plates. What would Johann Faust or William Caxton, working his wooden hand press in the crypt of West-

minster Abbey, have thought of it all? Much of the development of mass printing came in my own time in Fleet Street. The Education Act of 1870 had by 1886 begun to create a nation of readers, and clear-eyed financiers and business men came to see that there was 'big money' in it. The old-time newspaper was usually a party affair. With the mammoth circulations there was a change. Napoleonic financiers, the shareholders and their directors, were out for 'big money,' and if they could divine and hit the public taste, a paper or a syndicate of papers, was as auriferous as a Rand reef. That has not been all to the good of the Fleet Street working journalist. Papers that had been great organs of party political opinion have been sold over-night as a ship or a house might be sold, and editors and members of the staff who could not change their political coats in the morning have gone into the wilderness, and had to begin again, very likely a good deal lower down. Fleet Street has its roll of martyrs for conscience' sake. Papers that could not 'ginger themselves up' to meet the competition of the spicy new journalism, such as *The Standard*, *The St. James's Gazette*, *The Globe*, with its admirable 'turn-overs,' *The Pall Mall Gazette* and a dozen others dropped out. Much more money was spent and space given to sporting news. Then came the picture page, artfully designed to capture the women. To get and hold circulation free insurance schemes were invented. Some of the 'greatest circulations' laid themselves out to get the women, assured that if the women liked the paper the man would have to take it, though he might prefer a paper of a more brain-feeding type. One Fleet Street Syndicate psycholo-

gist, who ran a Woman's Page, heard the suggestion of a woman member of the page's staff that there were intelligent women, after all, and that an occasional article, as a relief from 'piffle,' might not do any harm. 'No!' he thundered, 'Women like piffle, and piffle they shall have.'

There have been considerable structural alterations in the street since I entered it. Buildings at the westward end, that just escaped the Great Fire, were ruthlessly sacrificed to make room for modern blocks of shops and offices. The only buildings now that Dr. Johnson would recognize, if he 'took a walk along Fleet Street,' would be St. Bride's, St. Dunstan's and the Jacobean house used as a barber's shop. St. Bride's Institute, the training school of printers' apprentices, is a Fleet Street feature little known to the general public. Its endowment gained by the allocation to it by the Charity and Ecclesiastical Commissioners of several charities the objects of which had become obsolete. For instance, a pious Romanist in Queen Mary's time left £5 a year to provide faggots for the burning of heretics at Smithfield. It would not be surprising to learn that St. Bride's Institute turns out boys, whose training has been helped by that 'charity,' to print heresy that might make the donor turn in his grave.

In the later 'eighties the old Bohemian tradition still lingered in Fleet Street. A teetotaller, as I was, felt 'out of it.' I heard stories of men who always fortified themselves before writing a leader with as many whiskies as would put an average 'moderate' on his back, and the marvel was that on such a method they wrote with such

force, clarity and concision. Some of them, of course, were Scotsmen, who can stand anything; most of them survivors of the Dickensian age, when a teetotaler was looked on with contempt as a mean-souled and hypocritical Stiggins. There was a story of one mighty potationist, one of the 'summits' of Fleet Street, who, when whisky showed signs of obfuscating his mental atmosphere, 'sobered down on beer.' Be it remembered that in those days the City luncheon tradition was a pint of Bass or a half-pint of port. The 'dry' cheap restaurants were in 1886 only just coming in. There were an A.B.C. and an Express Dairy shop in Fleet Street, but the fare provided was limited in kind and not nearly substantial enough for a healthy appetite. Groom's, now more than a century old, next door to *The Christian World*, was about the best 'dry' house where a substantial meal could be had. The journalist, the business man, the professional man had to rely on two or three hotels, and restaurants run by Italians, where customers were expected to take wine or other alcoholic drink. There was a good English restaurant, Craig's, near to St. Dunstan's Church, which specialized on fish and tripe. Years ago it disappeared when the building was pulled down in the interest of the 'improvement' of Fleet Street. To-day, Lyons with its 'Nippies,' the A.B.C. considerably smartened up both in its menus and its waitresses and other light refreshment restaurants have powerfully contributed to a revolutionary and most salutary change in drinking habits that has affected all classes of City workers, including journalists. Long since I came to the conclusion that the most effective way of combating excessive drinking



was to provide substitutes for public-houses and restaurants that relied for profit on their wine lists. The weakening of the alcoholic strength of drinks, and the permanent increase of price, effected by war-time restrictive action, have played into the hands of the 'dry' catering trade. Sometimes I have remonstrated with Temperance friends who talk of the £250,000,000 or so 'spent' on alcoholic drinks every year as compared with the £150,000,000 or so spent before the War, and seek to convey the impression that there is as much—or more—drinking as in the pre-War years, on the disingenúousness of such comparisons. By far the larger part of the £250,000,000 'spent on drink' is taxation levied on the drinkers. A Temperance statistician, with whom I recently discussed the question, admitted that during the War the alcohol consumed in drinks was 60 per cent. less than before the War, and it is still 40 per cent. less than before the War, and yearly decreasing. Both as a journalist and a religious and reform worker I object to weakening any good cause by fallacious arguments or juggling with figures.

But to return to the Bohemian days which flickered out in the early years of this century. One of the Bohemian survivals, who could write dazzlingly on anything at a moment's notice, turning on at will the taps of pathos or humour, was handed the telegram announcing the death of Cardinal Newman. He summoned a shorthand writer, and began to dictate an article. 'At seven this morning, in the Oratory at Birmingham, that great saint of God, John Henry Newman, was summoned to his eternal rest. He was born—now, where and when was he born?' he

asked. 'Get me the—*Biographical Dictionary*.' Opening the Dictionary, he continued, 'Ah, yes! He was born——' and he rattled out a noble tribute to the personality and the work of the man.

I was told of a member of the staff of a certain Agency, told off, when Queen Victoria was dying, to receive the message of her death, and despatch it to the subscribing papers. The Queen died at a late hour of the morning. Finding his lonely vigil wearisome, the watchman slipped out several times to refresh himself at a club. He was of a sentimental disposition and the more he refreshed himself the more sentimental he became. The message came at last. An hour later the Chief entered the office and found the sentimentalist sobbing with his head buried in his hands on the desk. 'She's gone!' he groaned. 'She's gone! The dear old lady's gone! We shall never see her like again.' 'You sent off the messages, all right, of course?' said the Chief. 'Good heavens!' exclaimed the horrified man. 'I was so overcome that I clean forgot to send the messages!'

Fleet Street to-day is a model of journalist sobriety. There are not a few teetotallers in the higher and lower grades of its journalism. And among the 'moderates' many make it a rule not to take their modest glass till the day's work is done. The fact is that journalism, like most other businesses and professions, has been so speeded up, and has become so much more exacting, that a Pressman cannot afford to diminish his mental control and clarity by indulgence in alcoholic drinks.

It may surprise some of my friends in the churches to

learn that even on the daily Press in Fleet Street there are many sincerely religious men, some of whom are regular and popular lay preachers, Brotherhood speakers and the like. My colleague Arthur Porritt, now Editor of *The Christian World*, and myself—we shared the same room for twenty-five years—were really startled one day before the War when two men, representatives of papers that were anathema in Free Church circles, came to see us with a proposal to co-operate in the establishment of a Press Prayer Union. We did not at the time feel it desirable to do so, but the proposal at least showed that there were still ‘saints in Cæsar’s Household.’ When, at a Press Supper at the last meeting of a National Free Church Council Conference, I responded on behalf of the Press to the toast proposed by Dr. A. E. Garvie, I mentioned the incident, the Doctor smilingly expressed scepticism as to the saintly element in Cæsar’s Fleet Street palaces. Pressmen, however, do not wear their religion on their sleeves. They go to conferences and other religious functions professionally, and perhaps the impression is conveyed of a cynical callousness to religion when, absorbed in producing copy, they remain the only cool people in Assemblies excited by the blazing eloquence of the ‘stars,’ and are the only dry-eyes when the masters of pathos have worked up general emotion. ‘Masters of pathos’ reminds me of the Missionary Secretary who, when it came to the collection, never failed to score with a story of the taxi-driver who had recognized him and told him to put the fare in the collection, or of a very poor charwoman widow, or a laundry girl, who in the lobby had slipped a sovereign into his

hand, and told him she had been saving up sixpence a week for the Anniversary.

Having to attend conferences of all denominations, the journalist is compelled to hammer out his own working faith. At a Roman Catholic Congress he hears that the only true Church is that whose keys were delivered to Peter, and have been handed down to Peter's successors. At the Church Congress it is impressed on him that the Historic Episcopate is essential to the validity of the spiritual authority of the ministry of a Protestant Church. At Free Church denominational Conferences and Unions it is, 'We all know that the New Testament Church was Congregational,' or Presbyterian, and so on. I was President of a Free Church Council. At the reception on my taking office I chatted at a little tea-table with a man. I raised the question, 'Supposing all the denominations disappeared, and their existence was completely forgotten. Supposing the New Testament was searched to discover on what lines a Church should be created—what Church would it be?' 'Why, the Baptist Church, of course,' was the instant and emphatic reply.

It was not surprising that some of the 'daily' men sent to religious functions, accustomed to doing sports, political meetings or criminal sensations, found themselves nonplussed by theological discussions, or discussions on intricate details of denominational politics. Often such men came to me for help, and it was always a delight to dictate to them an informative and intelligible summary. A distinguished College Principal complained to me once that after spending weeks on preparing an address on some very important theological question, he

found that the reporters had ignored all his solid facts and reasoned argument, and had given only a few irrelevancies or 'asides.' He was none too pleased when I suggested that probably the daily men picked out the irrelevancies and the 'asides' as all that was likely to be of public interest. It is not every theologian who has Dean Inge's knack of converting everything he says into 'public interest.' Theology may be the life blood of the theologian, but to the 'general reader' it is not 'newsy' or 'factual,' to use Press slang, and is 'taken as read' in the crowded columns of the modern daily.

Pressmen must be allowed to be religious in their own way. They are at least intensely humanitarian, and back for all they're worth every movement and effort that is for the relief and uplifting of suffering humanity.

General William Booth liked to poke fun at them. I remember how once, looking down at the Press table, he told a story of a defunct Pressman who appeared at the gates of heaven. 'Are you a Christian?' 'No, I am a reporter.' 'Pass in,' said the Janitor.

Fleet Street has been amused by various scares raised as to 'dark forces' supposed to be pulling the strings behind the scenes. A foremost preacher a quarter of a century or so since allowed himself to be persuaded that there was a disguised Jesuit in every Fleet Street office. He raised an alarm and tried to get resolutions of protest passed, but I think he later convinced himself that it was a mare's nest. There are, of course, Roman Catholics on the Press, for bright young Irishmen make good journalists, but I doubt if they do much furtively for their Church. If a good deal of Roman Catholic personal and

other matter gets into the papers, it is because there is a well-managed Press department at Archbishop's House, and no paper refuses intrinsically good copy. It is open to the Church of England or the Free Churches to 'go and do likewise,' and they are doing it to a far greater extent than used to be the case. I myself often complained in *The Christian World* of the way in which the Free Churches were prejudiced in the minds of Pressmen by shockingly bad arrangements made at most Free Church Conferences for the convenience and comfort of the Press. Usually the local committee was to blame, but the Headquarters office ought to have insisted and seen that adequate accommodation was provided, and a Press steward appointed to supply advance proofs of papers and addresses and to be at call for any information that was required. When the Congregational Union met at Halifax the Pressmen were almost killed with kindness by the hospitable ladies. A writing-room was set apart for the men. There was a coffee and light refreshments bar. The ladies kept pressing us to eat and drink, and sheer gallantry obliged us to go on eating and drinking till our waistcoat buttons almost gave way under the strain.

A Yorkshire daily sub-editor told me of a Roman Catholic reporter on his staff who returned from a meeting full of 'the best quotation I ever heard in my life. It was, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." It's glorious,' said the reporter. 'Do you know who is the author?' 'It's in the Bible,' said the sub-editor. 'You'll

find it in the Book of Isaiah.' The reporter borrowed the office Bible. He turned up in the morning with dark rings round his eyes and pallid face. 'By Jove!' he said, 'what a poet that chap Isaiah is! I sat up all night reading him, and sampled several of the other fellows.'

Miss Marie Corelli, who had a good word to say for the devil—*The Sorrows of Satan* were that when he had followed Burns's advice to 'tak a thocht and mend,' and win his way back as a penitent to a forfeited heaven, he was doomed to go on tempting weak mortals, and could not regain heaven till everybody who yielded to his wiles was purged—had no good word for Fleet Street. And yet once she was in and out of Fleet Street offices, most graciously affable to editors whose reviewers had recognized her precocious genius. I reviewed her first two books and like others thought them highly promising for a Miss of eighteen to twenty—later it got about that she was three or four years older than the reviewers were allowed to believe. After her second book the canons of sound criticism came to be applied to her work as that of a professional. But Miss Corelli, like a certain theatrical acting manager, craved for 'Praise, praise, praise,' and raved and metaphorically tore her hair when spots were detected on her suns. She gave orders to her publishers that no more books were to be sent for review. She declared that Fleet Street was in a conspiracy against her, because the men were jealous of her genius as a woman. Editors no longer basked in the sunshine of her smiles. She 'showed up' Fleet Street in more than one of her stories. The 'dark powers' with her were Jew financiers who controlled

the papers, and compelled the journalists to stifle their consciences in the interest of high finance. In *The Treasure of Heaven*—that weird story of a millionaire who, overhearing his fiancée brazenly confess that she was only marrying him for his money, left London and, padding the linings of a second-hand suit with bank notes, tramped the West Country to search for hearts of gold, and found them among the poorest, as thick as gooseberries on a bush—she settled Fleet Street's hash once for all.

That was Marie to a T.

I was week-end guest of a Mayor of Stratford-on-Avon, and he told me stories of her local feuds. She had had the design of immortalizing herself by doing something for Shakespeare in the Parish Church. Mr. Flower, the philanthropic Stratford brewer, jumped the claim by presenting a stained glass Shakespeare Window. Marie went for him tooth and nail. In her next novel the villain was a brewer who brightened his beer with arsenic, and poisoned eight hundred drinkers before the cause of the mortality was discovered.

There was a little greengrocer whose bill Marie disputed. He maintained the accuracy of his account and threatened to County Court her if the bill was not paid. Sure enough, again in her next novel, there was a caricature of the greengrocer. He had thin legs. His 'second self' was pictured as a man 'with legs like those of a piano stool.' Everybody recognized him, and made his life miserable by the interest they showed in his legs.

But Marie met more than her match in a lady music-teacher who taught her pupils in a house opposite to



that of Miss Corelli in the Square. Marie sent her a note—'Miss Corelli's compliments to Miss Blank, and Miss Corelli would be greatly obliged if Miss Blank's pupils did not practise between the hours of ten and one in the morning, as it is during those hours that Miss Corelli does her literary work.'

The prompt reply was 'Miss Blank has received Miss Corelli's note, and if she thought that her pupils' practice would prevent Miss Corelli doing any more literary work, they should practise all day long.'

W. T. Stead was in his glory when I entered Fleet Street. Every Pressman admired and laughed at him. He made *The Pall Mall Gazette* hum, after John Morley had deserted journalism for politics, and removed his restraining hand. No journalist had such a flair for startling sensations. At once a Puritan Nonconformist and a 'Bigger Navy' man, a level-headed publicist and a crank of the deepest dye, a man who had never been to a theatre and yet with the strongest dramatic interest, he was the marvel and the mystery of Fleet Street. He eclipsed even the great de Blowitz as the British journalist who struck the imagination of the Continent. He was recklessly fearless, as the 'Maiden Tribute' campaign showed. He boiled over with enthusiastic energy and yet he was naturally indolent and dilatory. Besides newspaper editorship, he ran *The Review of Reviews* and poured out his series of penny classics and collections of cheap reproductions of artistic masterpieces. His business manager told me how Stead would go to some favourite retired seaside place, and lie on his back for days together. The manager would have sternly to fetch him back to London

and almost stand over him while he was getting out the next number of the *Review*, left untouched till within four days of publication, but into those four days Stead would crowd three weeks' work, and it was always 'all right on the day.' Once, going to Paris, Stead missed the night train. In the morning Mr. Stout found that he had returned to the office, and had spent the whole night in knocking off a penny booklet he had had in his mind on *The Life of Jesus*. The MS. was complete, and made eighty printed pages.

The 'Julia' communications, the stunt of sending a lady round in semi-masculine costume, and other eccentricities could not depreciate Stead's journalistic value. His chivalry in regard to women was almost fanatical and sometimes comic. I heard him confound a Temperance meeting by eloquently defending barmaids as exercising a refining influence on the men who frequented the bars. A woman, anywhere, he held, was an angel and her influence could not be other than good. Every journalist sorrowed when Stead went down in the *Titanic*, and said the sting of death to Stead must have been the thought of the glorious 'story' he would be deprived of getting.

Stead's influence in Fleet Street was wholesome. His personal character, his strength of convictions and fearless honesty of expression, his simple religion, his sobriety, his humanity, his good fellowship, his pride in the Press and fraternity with all journalists made on Fleet Street a deep and enduring impression.

## CHAPTER XIV

### NEWSPAPER PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

*From Rags to Wood Pulp—The Editor and His Staff—  
The Outer Circle—The Society Gossiper—The Car-  
toonist—The British and the Foreign Press—Dramatic,  
Musical and Art Critics—‘The End of a Perfect Day’—  
The Advertisement Side—‘Writing up’—An ‘Olympic’  
Cruise—Press Parties in Wales—The Insomnia ‘Cure’  
—At Buckfast Abbey—‘Benedictine for an Hour’—  
English ‘Sydney Harbours’ and ‘Bays of Naples’*

READERS who dip into their morning paper, or their favourite weekly, at the breakfast-table have no idea of the immense amount of varied work that has gone to the making of that paper. Forests are felled in Scandinavian countries and in Northern Ontario, for the trees to be pulped for the manufacture of the five-mile drums that are run off on the printing machines. The ravenous presses have created a boom in forestry that is bringing huge prosperity to countries where a few years ago ‘still stood the forests primeval,’ desolatingly lonely and of little commercial value. The paper shortage was making itself felt when I entered Fleet Street. The rags supply had been hopelessly insufficient. Esparto grass was a temporary substitute, but not all the sand dunes of the world could grow grass enough to feed the maw of the press. It was the forests that saved the situation. Mr. Frank Lloyd, whose great works at Sittingbourne

supply the demands of many papers, was among the first to recognize and exploit the possibilities of wood pulp. Lord Northcliffe created a town round the Northern Ontario works that minister to the needs of what is now Northcliffe House. The apple and peach orchards and the vineyards of the fruit belt of Southern Ontario are not now in it with the forest belt of Northern Ontario.

As a beginner with the 'composing stick,' it is not without sentimental regret that I have seen the linotype—that typewriter-like worker of magic—replace the old hand-setting, but the development of 'greatest circulations' made hand-setting a far too dilatory business. It is not only 'greatest circulations' but the rushing out of hourly editions of evening papers, with the latest sporting results, that demands lightning setting of copy. The 'fudge box' enables an evening paper to be on the streets, with the almost instantaneous filling of a space left vacant, with the Derby result, or the verdict in a sensational case, within five minutes of the announcement of the event.

The literary production of a paper is an exceedingly complicated business. The editor needs to be a 'live wire,' brimful of ideas, able to impress his personality on every member of his staff. The brighter the journalists, the more they are 'kittle cattle.' The editor needs to be alike a strong and tactful team-driver. He may have to defend his staff against a domineering managing director, or a board that wants to dictate to him its own ideas of how the paper should be carried on. Good editorship must be independent editorship. The editor must be free to work out his own ideas. To fetter him is the surest

means of lowering the standard, losing circulation and therewith advertisements. Some of the most successful editors rarely write a line themselves. Their business is to lay hands on the men who can write, and get them to write what they want. There will be specialists on the staff, or regular outside contributors, to whom are allotted classes of subjects in which they will express the opinions of the paper, and maintain consistency in the opinions. Very distinguished men, such as Lord Salisbury and Dean Wace, were regular leader writers, in their early years, on *The Times* and other first-class dailies. Not a few future leaders of the Bar, and Judges, were glad to pick up handfuls of guineas while climbing the lower rungs of the ladder, by leader writing, doing reviews, or Law Court reports and other specialist work. There is, indeed, no profession that is so democratic in its recognition of the value of brains, whether in the blue-blooded race of the Vere de Veres or in the men who started in Board or National School and won their way by sheer ability and grit to the top.

The modern editor spreads his net very widely, and draws up all manner of fish. Novelists, playwrights, parsons, actors and actresses, dancing men and women, doctors, gardeners, experts in all the sports write for the Press.

Since the War the 'Society' specialist has come much to the front and makes 'good money.' T. P. O'Connor never dreamed of what his tittle-tattle 'Mainly about People' was to come to. It now provides conversation for millions of women readers. The Society journalist, man or woman, will look in at a dozen hotels, restaurants,

'coming out' and cocktail parties of the *grandes dames* and millionaires who make up the Ten Thousand without whom 'London is empty' in a night. They are at all the Grand Opera Season openings, at the notable weddings and a score of 'fashionable' functions. They tell how 'the lovely Countess This' and the 'ravishing Mrs. That' looked, with whom she was, what she wore, her priceless jewels. Statesmen relaxing from the brow-wrinkling and hair-greying problems with which they are wrestling 'in mortal strife,' great lights of the City and merchant princes taking a night off, are noted with their women folk and duly described. Popular idols of the theatres and films graciously overcome their shyness and consent to grant interviews, and readers learn about their fabulous successes, and their tastes in dress, jewellery and how domesticated they really are. Newly engaged couples are 'spotted' and 'the world that loves a lover' is told how happy they were dining together at the Restaurant crowded with the élite of the rich and noble, or at the Cabaret. The Park provides fodder for copy, all the more if the journalist manœuvres a camera. The little York Princesses cannot go out with their 'Nannie' without being seen and snapped for the next morning's 'Back Page.' One wonders at the intimate 'Who's Who' omniscience of these Society specialists, with their 'Of course, Lady So-and-so is a daughter of the Duke of Blankshire,' or 'Of course, Miss Alice Casterbridge'—the film star with a £500-week engagement—is in private life Mrs. Alexander Smith, and has two charming children.' A million or two of women readers revel in such gossip and retail it to each other, and the labourer

who dishes it up is doubtless worthy of his or her hire.

The cartoonist has become an established institution. Among the dailies *The Westminster Gazette*, with Frederick Carruthers Gould, set the fashion of the political cartoon. 'F. C. G.' good-humouredly guyed Joseph Chamberlain, who enjoyed the caricatures of himself as much as anybody. 'F. C. G.' made large capital of 'The Mad Hatter' as the prototype of the 'Tariff Reformer.' To-day even Free Church Puritans, who would not bet a penny to save their lives, look for Webster's sporting cartoons in *The Daily Mail*, and 'Low,' of *The Evening Standard*, is artist twin brother to the inexhaustibly facetious Thomas of *The News-Chronicle* and *The Star*. It may be said of the Press cartoonist that 'every picture tells a story,' and people who never read a leading article often get the political or other value of a leading article out of a cartoon.

The Press photographer has also solidly established himself. He turns up at every function, and Prime Ministers and Archbishops yield submissively to his demand to 'Stand' while he takes a flashlight snap of the platform. The sedatest survivals of the Old Journalism have been forced to adopt the pictorial 'Back Page.'

British papers are really *newspapers*, the newsiest papers in the world. That may be because our Press goes back to the Civil War, when many papers, some of them still in existence, were started on the two sides. In later times, before the era of railways and the penny post, there was a keen appetite in the country towns for both home and foreign news, especially in times of war, and from William and Mary's time down to the final overthrow of

Napoleon we were mostly at war. Our Press had a long start of the Press of other countries. No doubt the fact that we are a small and compact country, in which the organized collection of news is manageable, helped our Press to develop that system of getting news under which any interesting event in the remotest village 'gets into the papers' within an hour or two of the happening. Germany, before the creation of the Empire, was a congeries of States, each of which had papers that were kept tightly in leading strings, and since 1870 the papers of the Reich have been largely tuned and fed by the Bureaucracy. Politics of the doctored kind, literature, music and the theatre were the pabulum of the readers rather than a full and accurate news supply. The French Press, with all the brilliant literary quality of some of its papers, makes a pitiable show in regard to news. Politics, the theatres and music-halls, sports, personal gossip—often about women and men who were best left alone—and the feuilleton fill the few and meagre pages. News is usually relegated to paragraphic *faits divers*.

Our British Press has always claimed, and more or less obtained, democratic freedom of speech, and no Press can flourish without that. It may be that sometimes the liberty has passed into license, as with our freedom of public speech, but our people have learned how to make the necessary discounts. We believe it is safer to let 'hot air merchants' have their fling, rather than drive them into secret mischief making. An American Church leader, in England a few summers ago, told me they dare not, in the United States, with its large, mixed and impressible foreign element, allow men to talk and write as we allow



men to talk and write in Hyde Park and in certain inflammatory organs of extreme parties. In the States it would surely lead to dangerous disorder.

As regards the American Press, so far as I have had opportunities of studying it, the difficulty of collecting news is much as it was in Germany before Germany was united in the Reich. Each State has its separate interests. The States of the Middle West and the Pacific Coast are largely indifferent to what happens in the East and *vice versa*. Interests are so diverse and discordant that anything like a Press synthesis of the happenings and doings of the whole country is practically impossible. There are a few very good papers, but the news as a rule is scrappy. The 'largest circulations' thrive on sensational 'Stunts,' astonishing 'Interviews' which foreign celebrities often fail to recognize as resembling anything that was actually said at all, and the artistically worked up 'Stories' of 'Scoop' reporters.

On the British Press the News Editor and the News-sub-editors play all-important parts. Readers may agree or disagree with the political colour of a paper, but if its news services are good, and skilfully sub-edited, the paper gets its big constituency. A popular illusion about papers is that much matter is put in 'to fill up.' I have even heard it suggested that corrections of misleading reports are put in with the same object of 'filling up.' The truth is that the carking care of every Editor and sub-editor is not to get matter 'to fill up' but to sift and condense the overwhelming flow of matter into the office, and to decide what, even of matter that is really good, it is possible to leave out. Even a small country paper is

faced with this difficulty, and with a daily, or a weekly having a national circulation overflowing to the Seven Seas, the 'leaving out' difficulty, with the new classes of matter that demand to be included, preys on the journalistic nerves. They are not 'twelve baskets'—waste-paper baskets—'that remain,' but scores of baskets, after copy has been cut to the bone, and sheaves of it discarded altogether. So much space has to be filled. It must not be overfilled in the giving out of copy, for columns overset have to be scrapped altogether, which means money wasted. There may be inevitable oversetting when at the last hour columns of unanticipated advertisements arrive, and good 'reading matter' is crowded out by the 'ads'—the Editor and the Advertisement Manager find it as hard as a Communist and a Fascist to love each other.

How is the news obtained? The country is covered with an army of news 'scouts' in the shape of reporters on local papers, 'free lances,' etc. These have their eyes and ears always open to supply dailies and weeklies direct, or to supply the great Press Agencies that send their 'general or special services to perhaps a hundred or a hundred and fifty papers. These local pickers up of news are immediately on the scene at every accident, crime or other interesting event. They skim the cream of local and district news for the papers and Agencies that have the means to make it worth their while. It has often happened that a 'free lancer,' or local paper 'penny-a-liner'—the 'penny' is now happily superseded—has shown such capacity that he has caught the eye of a discriminating Editor or sub-editor, and secured a staff position on a

good paper. Every effort is made to verify the accuracy of news sent in. It damages a paper's reputation to have to correct or apologize for an inaccuracy, not to speak of the risk of an action for libel. Every responsible journalist is expected to safeguard his paper against libel actions.

British papers, as a rule, if a misleading statement, prejudicial to anybody, slips through, correct it promptly and handsomely apologize. Sometimes there is an attempt to blackmail a paper for an alleged untrue and damaging statement. In most cases the Editor or proprietor determines to 'stand the racket' and no more is heard of the threatened action.

I do not vouch for the truth of the story of the American paper that adopted the policy of never correcting or apologizing for any erroneous statement. One morning an irate man entered the office and demanded to see the Editor. 'What's the trouble?' asked the Editor. 'Trouble? Why last week you put me in the Obituary, and here am I as much alive as you are. What are you going to do about it?' 'Well, I'm sorry,' said the Editor, 'but we never admit an error in this paper. We can't withdraw the statement, but I'll tell you what we'll do—next week we'll put you in among the Births.'

The dailies have now taken not only literature but all the arts under their wings. The dramatic, musical and art critics are mighty potentates on whose verdicts much of the success of artists and artistes depends. I read the criticisms with interest not only as a journalist, but as one to whom the arts appeal. Sometimes I have thought that certain critics allow personal preferences and prejudices unduly to influence them. They forget, as some book

reviewers forget, to judge plays and other art productions from the viewpoint of their intention and the audiences and spectators to whom they are designed to appeal. I have noted how some critics are so super-refined and super-sensitive in their aesthetic perception that even the best of everything is not good enough for them. A play, a musical composition, a singer or an actor, a picture or a piece of sculpture may from the cultivated man or woman who has no notice to write win unqualified commendation, but the professional critic feels it due to his artistic conscience always to interpose a 'but.' 'Herr So-and-So may have played Beethoven or Bach with intellectual insight and emotional sympathy, but he missed a note or two or played wrong ones.' 'So-and-So might have sung with the liquid melody of the nightingale, but she was cold,' or the critic compared her with Madam Somebody who takes her couple of hundred guineas for an evening's engagement. If the critics were a little more considerate to real artists or artistes, though under the critical microscope a few specks might be detected, they might serve art even better than they do by their Draconic judgments.

With one very eminent musician, an examiner for University degrees, and critic and reviewer for leading musical and daily papers, I took part in an amusing little comedy during war time. We were fellow guests at a private hotel on the South-west coast. There was a long spell of cold wet weather. One night, everybody being 'fed up,' a concert was suggested. The eminent musician was known only to my wife and myself—we were drawn together by a common interest in books. After two or

three songs of a dreadfully banal kind, a 'flapper' was pressed to sing something. She allowed herself to be persuaded and produced *The End of a Perfect Day*, which organists used to play when the 'All clear' sounded after a raid on week-night service night. The young lady looked round for an accompanist. 'Do you play?' she asked the great organist and Professor. 'A little,' he said. 'Do you think you could manage *The End of a Perfect Day*?' 'I'll try.' Seating himself at the piano, originally a cheap one and badly in need of tuning, he accompanied the first verse. In the second verse he improvised a lovely arabesque. Listeners 'sat up and took notice.' 'Do you play any pieces?' asked a Bristol tradesman? 'I can manage one or two.' 'Do you know *The Funeral March of a Marionette*?' 'I haven't the pleasure of acquaintance with the masterpiece.'

He started off on some Chopin, and went on with some Improvisations, and the piano gave out such music as its soul, if it had a soul, had never dreamt was in it. Everybody wanted to know who was the musician, but we had promised to maintain the incognito. He took his meals at the little table with my wife and myself, and hugely enjoyed at breakfast next morning the memory of the experience of the night before.

Though a minister told me the story of the origin of *The End of a Perfect Day* I have my doubts about it. 'The author and her husband were spending a holiday in Switzerland. They climbed a mountain together. All was for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Towards nightfall, the world forgotten, they stood on the edge of a cliff, and seemed to be looking into heaven. Both were

ravished by the unearthly beauty of the scene. With a happy smile the poet very gently pushed the adored husband over the cliff, wandered down the mountain side in Wordsworthian mood, relished the excellent dinner at the hotel and, charged with the inspiration of the day, wrote the song.'

To soothe susceptible nerves let me add that, buoyed by the emotional inflation, the husband floated gently down to earth, spent a glorious night drinking in the radiance of the moon, and was in time for the breakfast rolls, coffee and honey at the hotel.

1914 saw the advertisements of hundreds of country weeklies, and of most religious papers, disappear, guillotined by the War. The country papers, heavily dependent on the advertisements, were very hard hit. Some religious papers went under altogether and have never reappeared, others had their financial backs broken, and have maintained a precarious existence by denominational subscriptions. When, in addition, printers and machinists' wages went up to 160 per cent. above pre-War level, and paper soared to several hundred per cent. above pre-War prices, the proprietors of the country and religious papers had a miserable time. The journalists of such papers found themselves with stationary or reduced salaries. It was not that proprietors wanted to victimize them, but always, when the suggestion was made that the time had come for a reconsideration of the salary question, the printers had just demanded another 20 per cent. or paper had gone up another 25 per cent. Still, the journalists never 'downed pens.' They felt they had got to help in saving the papers, and if it meant cutting the expenditure on

necessaries of life to the bone and sacrificing holidays, they did it with smiles and loyalty. Thousands concerned in the mechanical production and distribution of papers owe it to them that they are not now 'on the dole.'

Artists have been pressed more and more into the service of advertising. There are art schools that specialize on effective picture advertisements.

Sometimes the paths of the journalist and the advertisement manager cross each other. The journalist is sent to factories, to industrial exhibitions, to all sorts of functions in the interest of trade and to joy-rides on land and sea. He asks no questions. 'His not to reason why.' His business is to 'write up.' If there have been transactions and understandings behind the Editorial chair it is no concern of the 'writer up.' It may be that advertising agencies arrange such matters. If the 'writing up' makes copy that is good for the paper, the enterprises that incidentally gain may congratulate themselves.

I have always been interested in industrial undertakings and have written about many industries with no set purpose of advertising them. People are interested in knowing how their bread and biscuits and jam, their curtains and carpets, their cigarettes and matches, their 'headwear' and 'foot wear' are made, and the journalist, with an expert to explain the processes, does articles that enrich conversation in the home. Once, with about a dozen other Pressmen, I was sent to a certain 'dry' brewery that was sending out a substitute for ale—it looked like ale, it smelt like ale, it tasted like ale, but there was no alcohol in it, and a Good Templar might drink it without qualms. A circular was sent earnestly impressing the solemn

thought that nothing had so held up the Temperance movement as the lack of a really satisfactory substitute for ale. Here was the thing that would make every Temperance heart throb with joy, and send the movement forward by leaps and bounds. A lunch was provided for us. The bottles, however, bore the Bass label, and there were whisky and liqueurs. It was the representative of a sporting paper—I wondered how he came there—who half-way through the lunch asked, ‘What about the — ale? Hadn’t we better sample it?’ ‘If you would like to try it,’ said our host, ‘I will send for some. I never drink the stuff myself.’

There was a very pleasant three days’ outing when the *Olympic*, furnished with a safety ‘false bottom’ after the *Titanic* disaster, was to make her first resumed Atlantic trip. We sailed from Southampton to Cherbourg and thence to Queenstown, where we picked up the *Megantic* on the homeward trip, and went round to Liverpool. The fifty odd journalists were ‘done very well,’ as always on such occasions, in the floating palatial hotel. The Chairman of the directors was with us. He showed us the *suites de luxe*. They were wainscoted with polished and exquisitely designed oak panels, but to our taste the effect was spoiled by garish inlaid tessellated marble plaques. ‘Yes,’ said the Chairman, ‘I agree with you, but North and South American millionaires are our most profitable patrons. They may pay a thousand pounds for a suite, and they like and expect this sort of thing.’

Since the War seaside pleasure resorts have been in increased competition with each other to attract visitors



who during the War, and through high fares afterwards, had got out of the habit of visiting the long-distance places. The railway companies and the municipalities combined to advertise them by 'Press Weeks.' I was member of two parties that had glorious joy rides in North Wales, visiting the holiday resorts on Cardigan Bay, and having motor runs into the hinterland. We were amused at the health statistics that were worked off on us at each place. There never was such a place for miraculous disappearance of all sorts of nerve and chronic ailments. At one town, well known to Mr. Lloyd George, the Mayor taught us to pronounce its name—he was convinced that its unpronounceability deterred timid Anglo-Saxons from facing clerks at the booking-office with demands for a ticket. At a very choice dinner the Mayor, a doctor, told us that visitors nerve-racked by insomnia, within a day or two found 'tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,' in that magic atmosphere. The Town Clerk told us stories as of miraculous cures at Lourdes of night-tossing victims enjoying hours of refreshing sleep. The medical officer convinced us of the truth of the stories by unanswerable statistics, made clearer by curved-line diagrams. Another doctor, an ex-Mayor, still further enforced the blessedness of ——— to insomniacs. He added the artistic touch that the death rate, though it was phenomenally low, would almost disappear but for the fact that doctors sent patients at the last gasp from ineffective resorts to die at ———.

As I had been elected orator of the party, I was called on to reply to the toast of 'The Press.' I said we had all been impressed by the evidence given as to the marvellous

curative influence of the air on sufferers from insomnia. Insomnia was the curse of Fleet Street. Hundreds of Fleet Street men never got a night's sleep. I was able to confirm all that had been told us. A Fleet Street man was recommended to ——. He arrived on the Saturday. So quickly did the air work its effect that he was able the very next day to sleep through two sermons. I think the Mayor's Chaplain did not thoroughly appreciate the story.

The next morning we were to be taken on a motor run through the country. I was standing with the Publicity Manager of the G.W.R. when the Mayor came along and we asked him to join us in our car. 'How are you this morning, Mr. Mayor?' I asked. 'I hope none the worse for our little dissipation last night?' 'Oh, I don't know,' he said. 'I haven't slept a wink all night.' 'What,' I asked, 'and that in a town where we were given to believe that the difficulty was to keep awake!' His Worship saw that he had 'put his foot in it,' and began to explain. 'I am a very abstemious man. Perhaps I ate more, and may have drunk a little more, than was good for me. And the company, you know. We had such a jolly time.' We relieved his alarm by promising him absolute mumness.

One thing that amused us on such tours was the story we invariably heard at every place visited, large or small, of some 'world traveller' who had spent a holiday there. Sometimes he was named. He had visited every continent, and sailed all the seas, and he had classed 'Our Bay' with Sydney Harbour and the Bay of Naples. A year or two later, arriving at Torquay for a 'Press Week,' I tried to 'take a rise' out of Mr. Felix Pole, then Publicity Manager of the G.W.R. He is a Cornishman, and local patriotism,

as well as desire to increase long-distance traffic, spurred him to 'boost' 'The Cornish Riviera' and 'Glorious Devon,' which really are above all 'boosting.' We emerged from the station in a snowstorm—on the 12th of May. I twitted Mr. Pole on the beautiful poster pictures of Cornwall, with the legend, 'Why go to the South of France? Go to the Cornish Riviera!' He retorted, 'You have given me an idea. We will get out a new set, "Why go to Switzerland when you can have snow in Torquay in May?"'

During that week we had one of the most agreeable experiences in my Press life—a visit to Buckfast Abbey, where we were the guests at lunch of the Abbot and his Benedictine monks. The snow had given place to real summer sunshine. We had a run on Dartmoor in the glory of its spring beauty, and thought that 'earth had not anything to show more fair.' The Lord Abbot, a gracious gentleman, made the heretic journalists his friends at once. We were shown over the church, of cathedral size, on the site of an eleventh-century Abbey, and were amazed to hear that it had been built by four monks, who had had a few months' training in masonry in France, in something like twenty years. Their zeal was such that they had often worked for hours after nightfall by electric light. It seemed incredible that four men could have done the work, and done it so magnificently in the time. It threw light on the raising of the cathedral 'Bibles in stone' in the Middle Ages. It is a Rule of the Benedictine Order that every monk does manual work of some kind. At Buckfast they raise their own meat, vegetables and fruit, and brew their own cider. We were shown valuable

natural history and mineralogical collections, for the monks are zealous students of natural science. Some are engaged in teaching, and others conduct preaching Missions.

There were ladies in our party. It was against the Benedictine rule for women to enter the precincts of the monastery, though the church was open to them, but lunch was provided for them in the little village embowered in trees. The Abbot smilingly explained that it was a Rule of the Order to maintain strictest silence during the meals, and he hoped we would not mind obeying the Rule. That really added to the zest for the lunch. We all confessed afterwards that the lunch was one of the richest experiences of our lives. The Abbot, at the centre of the cross table, had a small wooden hammer, with which he signalled to the waiter monks. He had his eyes on guests and waiters, and the waiters had their eyes on him. Sometimes, instead of raps with the hammer, he would make a significant gesture to clear away plates or to refill glasses. Another Rule came into operation. During the meal readers at a desk on a small platform took ten-minute turns at reading aloud Rules of the Order, or from the Life of St. Benedict, in Latin, and then passages from Josephus's *History of the Jews* in English. The meal was simple and substantial, but we suspected that the monks were enjoying, because we were the guests, some little unaccustomed luxuries. At the close they sang a Latin Grace, and filed out chanting a Latin Hymn.

On the green garth in the courtyard the Abbot poured out coffee. He addressed a little speech to us on the

difference between journalists and monks. Our very name signified that we were men of the day, dealing with matters of the day. The men whose lives were devoted to religion dealt with the things that were eternal. But there was no reason why the journalists should not do their day's work with the eternal in view. Our spokesman of the week was a Welshman who had been in Parliament, but between two General Elections was 'disengaged.' He had a gift for Lloyd Georgian similes and gracefully turned compliments. He had just started on his first sentence when the bells of the church burst into a merry peal which drowned his eloquence, much to the amusement of the Abbot and ourselves.

I sent to the Abbot a copy of *The Christian World* with my article, 'Benedictine for an Hour.' He graciously thanked me for its sympathetic tone, and said that if such a Protestant as myself felt inclined to spend a week as guest at the Abbey I should be welcome. As I talk much at meals I feared I should be too sorely tempted to break the Rule.

A word or two at the close of this chapter on the distribution of papers. The distribution is itself a huge, complicated, highly organized business. Three or four wholesale distributing firms in London—the oldest W. H. Smith and Sons—monopolize the lion's share of the business. There are provincial distributing firms that serve large and populous areas. As fast as the presses can reel them off armies of 'packers' make up the parcels with lightning rapidity in the packing rooms of the printing works, or in those of the big distributing firms. Fleets of motor cars rush the parcels to the railway

stations where special trains are ready to convey them to every part of the country. Some of the 'largest circulations' do much of their own distribution by their own service of motor cars to within 80 to 100 miles of London. Even the aeroplane has been pressed into the distributing service. Several London dailies are not content even with this, but they print special editions in and for the North, allowing for the inclusion of much matter of Northern interest by the exclusion of matter that can best be spared.

Some years ago *The Christian World* had to yield to the pressure of the Northern trade. Newsagents said their customers grumbled if the papers were not on their breakfast-tables. It had been the custom to go to press at about eight in the evening, keeping open for news up to seven o'clock. The Editorial staff did not shed many tears when, in order to meet the imperious exigencies of the North, the paper was closed up at three in the afternoon.

The railway bookstalls, of course, play a large part in the distribution of the countless papers and magazines, not only in serving travellers who supply themselves at the stations, but in supplying regular customers at their homes. A large army of men and boys is engaged to sell the multiplied editions of the evening papers in the streets. The multiplication of editions is due to the keenness of the sporting element among readers. Racing, yelling boys have papers almost snatched from their hands by men—and not a few women—eager to see the morning betting tips and the afternoon 'results.' A glance at these and they have no further use for the paper. There are, of course, cricket, football, golf and tennis enthusiasts

who buy the paper from sheer interest in the games, with no concern about 'money on.'

I used to note differences in the classes of street-sellers of certain papers. The old *Westminster Gazette* men always appealed to me. They were elderly men, steady-going, gentlemanly in their manners, having their clientèles of regular customers. I was sorry to see many of them disappear when the *W.G.* became a 'morning.' I had the idea that most of them were good Liberals, and that they would not take kindly to the selling of papers of other party colours.

It was Lord Northcliffe and the New Journalism that made the villages take in morning papers. Up till then the local weekly, supplemented in many cases by a denominational or other religious weekly, had met their needs. Likely enough the 'mornings,' with their mirrorings of the gay world outside, have made young villagers still more disinclined to put up with the humdrum, if wholesome, village life. I once saw a blind man in a village leaving papers from door to door. I wondered how he managed it. Had the papers been arranged in order, and did he trust that trained memory of the blind, or had he developed that tactile sensibility that enabled him to tell which paper was which by the feel of it?

# INDEX

- ABEL, CHARLES W., Coffee House chats, industry and athletics as means of grace, 137
- ADULT SCHOOLS, their great work for illiterates, 21
- AMERICA AND CANADA, comparative respect for law, 190
- APPRENTICESHIP IN THE 'EIGHTIES, 17
- ARCH, JOSEPH, Moses of the land-workers, 97
- ASQUITH, LORD OXFORD AND, his early years, Puritan strain, 'Counsel' style, 94
- BAKER, J. ALLEN, apostle of peace, 171
- BAYNE, PETER, 'Lessons from My Masters,' a 'touchable Scot,' 46
- BEECHER, HENRY WARD, the preacher's personality, 70
- BERLIN SUNDAY, 176
- BERRY, CHARLES ALBERT, soul of good fellowship, 36
- BERRY, SIDNEY M., Carrs Lane and Congregational Union, 36
- BLACK COUNTRY, THE, in early 'eighties, 24
- BOOTH, GENERAL WM., conversations with him, his sense of justice, 132
- BOYD-CARPENTER, BISHOP, literature-enriched preaching, 71
- BRADFORD, AMORY, pilgrimage to Austerfield, 169
- BRIERLEY, JONATHAN, 'J. B.,' of *The Christian World*, incorrigible optimist, essays that oxygenated thought, 61
- BRIGHT, JOHN, his sunset years, his oratory, 39
- BRITISH AND GERMAN CHURCHES' PEACE INTERCHANGES, Berlin platform comedy, 171
- BRITISH AND FOREIGN PRESS, 232
- 'CAMEL-LOADS OF COMMENTARIES,' 159
- CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, SIR H., business men as statesmen, 92
- CANADA FROM COAST TO COAST, 178
- CARNEGIE, ANDREW, Republican Campaign that failed, how to become a millionaire, 31
- CHAMBERLAIN, JOSEPH, his Radical days 'cucumber coolness,' 38
- CHINESE WOMEN, 139
- CLARKE, JAMES, creator of great religious journalism, his heroes, his 'touchability,' 'lapsed ministers,' champion youthful Spurgeon, 44
- CLIFFORD, DR. JOHN, scrupulous conscience, his quotations, 'Ironside' in 1914, 108
- COMPTON-RICKETT, SIR JOSEPH, his little vanities, 145
- CONTEMPORARY 'Classics,' 55
- CONTROVERSIALIST, THE, 'Hear all sides,' 12, 19
- CORELLI, MARIE, her feuds, 224
- 'CRAYON CHRISTOPHER,' Christian and gourmet, 48
- CROOKS, WILL, a sweetening influence, some of his stories, 99
- CUFF, WILLIAM, Spurgeon's testimonial, Shoreditch's friend, the penitent burglar, butcher once a year, 59
- CUYLER, T. L., 'hand-picking' v. 'tree-shaking,' 70



## 250 PRESS, PREACHERS AND POLITICIANS

- DALE, R. W., the biggest brain and head, 25
- DAUNCEY, HENRY, successor to James Chalmers, 144
- DEAN AMONG SOISSONS RUINS, 209
- DUDLEY, 1880 Election, illiteracy and corruption, 23
- DUNKLEY, HENRY, 'Verax' of *Manchester Examiner*, 12
- EDWARDS, PASSMORE, Carnegie's rival, 41
- FAIRBAIRN, DR. A. M., Macaulay and Carlyle influence, 16
- FARNINGHAM, MARIANNE, her weekly poem, 47
- FARRAR, CANON, multi-lingual quotations, 'The Larger Hope,' 72
- FIRST BAPTIST WORLD CONGRESS, 170
- FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL, 168
- FIRST NATIONAL BROTHERHOOD COUNCIL, 117
- FUR TRADERS ON HUDSON BAY, 192
- GIBBON, J. MORGAN, wasted ministers' mornings, way of escape, 123
- GLADSTONE AND DISRAELI in 1880, 85
- GLADSTONE crushes, 88
- 'GOOD PAROCHIAL SERMONS,' 74
- HALF-POWER PREACHING, 75
- HANNAY, DR. ALEXANDER, re-creator of Congregational Union, 64
- HARDIE, J. KEIR-, his platform weakness, an Isaiah to French Socialists, 97
- HARPER, ALFRED, Radical and mediaevalist, 52
- HARTLEY, SIR WM. P., 'The Lord's Portion,' cheerful workers as business asset, 146
- HISTORIC SUNDAY FOR FRENCH HUGUENOTS, 212
- HOLMES, F. M., 'rattling stories,' 54
- HORNE, CHARLES SILVESTER, Student Pastor to National leadership, 126
- HUGHES, HUGH PRICE, First Sunday of West London Central Mission, 129
- JOWETT, DR. J. H., development of his power, verbal fastidiousness and slavery to MS., 119
- LAY PREACHERS, work for their training, and MODERN MINOR PROPHETS, 85
- LIDDON, CANON, the 'grand style,' 70
- LLOYD GEORGE, DAVID, his *début* in London, restored French morale in 1918, 93
- MACLURE, SIR JOHN, in merry mood, the thumb that conquered, 65
- 'MADNESS THAT WILL REBUILD RHEIMS,' 208
- MECHANICAL REVIVALISM, 162
- MEYER, F. B., 1906 Election Campaign, in confessional mood, comedy at Naples, 113
- MILSOM, W. D., the complete sub-editor, 63
- NAPIER, JAMES, schoolmaster as editor, 18
- NATIONAL FREE CHURCH COUNCIL, its founders, 144

- 'OAHYEE,' type-writer apostle's new Bible, 157
- OXFORD MUSICAL EXAMINER, *The End of a Perfect Day*, 237
- PARKER, JOSEPH, pulpit genius and histrian, 105; a Whitefields comedy, 128
- PATRICIAN FAMILIES, their national value, 89
- 'PECULIAR PEOPLE' and 'Perfect Holiness,' counsel's 100-guinea fees, 152
- PICTON, JAMES ALLANSON, M.P., anti-dogmatist, 55
- PREACHERS 'BROTHERS UNDER THE SKIN,' 68
- PRESS, THE, British and Foreign, 232
- 'PSYCHIATRY,' ancient and modern, 75
- REED, THOMAS ALLEN, 20
- RICHARD, DR. TIMOTHY, 'United States of the World,' 137
- ROGERS, J. GUINNESS, calmer of storms, 'good at the battle-axe,' 125
- ROWLAND, ALFRED, seeking a 'wandering sheep,' 124
- SAINTS IN FLEET STREET, 219
- SCOTT-HOLLAND, CANON H., tor-rential delivery, 71
- 'SECOND COMINGISM,' 154
- SERMONS, FRESH AND STALE, 80
- SERMONS LONG OR SEEMING LONG? 76
- SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS, 150
- SINFUL PICTURES AND STATUES, 152
- SIR JOHN KIRKS, the two, tea with both, Livingstone's Chief of Staff, war on slave raiders and traders, 140
- SPIRITUALISM, 157
- SPURGEON, C. H., his silver voice, 39; joyous saint, 'Free Grace' v. 'Divine Decrees,' 107
- STEAD, W. T., saint and man of the world, 226
- THE CHRISTIAN WORLD PULPIT, founded in 1872, Editor 1888-1926, 69
- 'THE GREATEST QUOTATION,' 223
- TRADE UNION 'MASS MEETINGS,' 28
- UNIONS, CONGREGATIONAL AND BAPTIST, forty years at Press tables, smoking corner friendships, 64
- VEGETARIANISM AS A RELIGION, 165
- VOLKHOVSKY, FELIX, Russian Constitutional exiles' leader, 'the dynamite of ideas,' 101
- WAR-TIME EXPERIENCES IN FRANCE, August 1, 1914, first anniversary in Paris, Paris in Armistice Week, France in Versailles Treaty Week, 202
- WATKINSON, W. L., the sniffs and the humour, 78
- WOMEN'S FRANCHISE PIONEERS, 199
- WORBOISE, EMMA JANE, Rise of Free Church fiction, 49



